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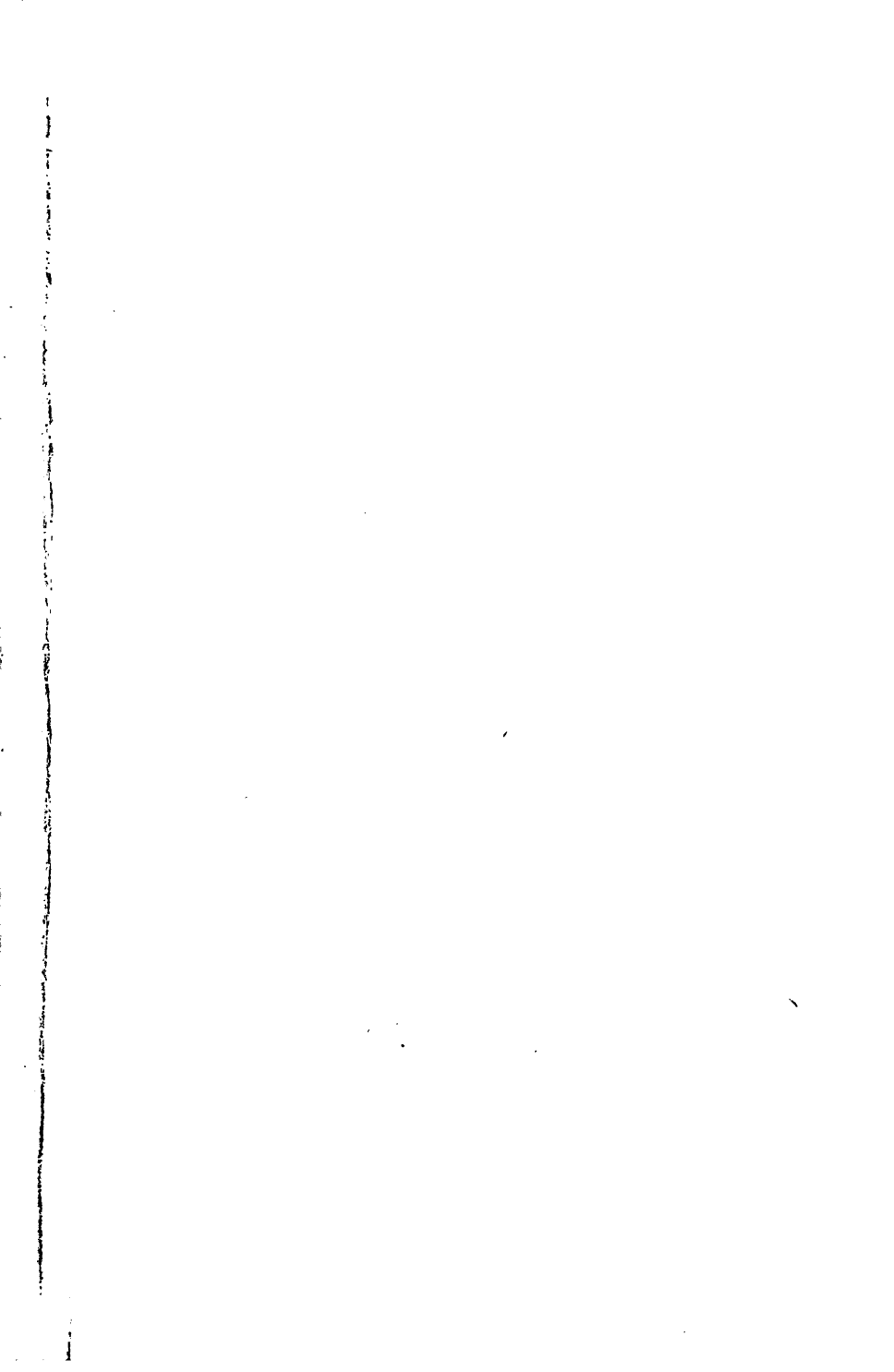
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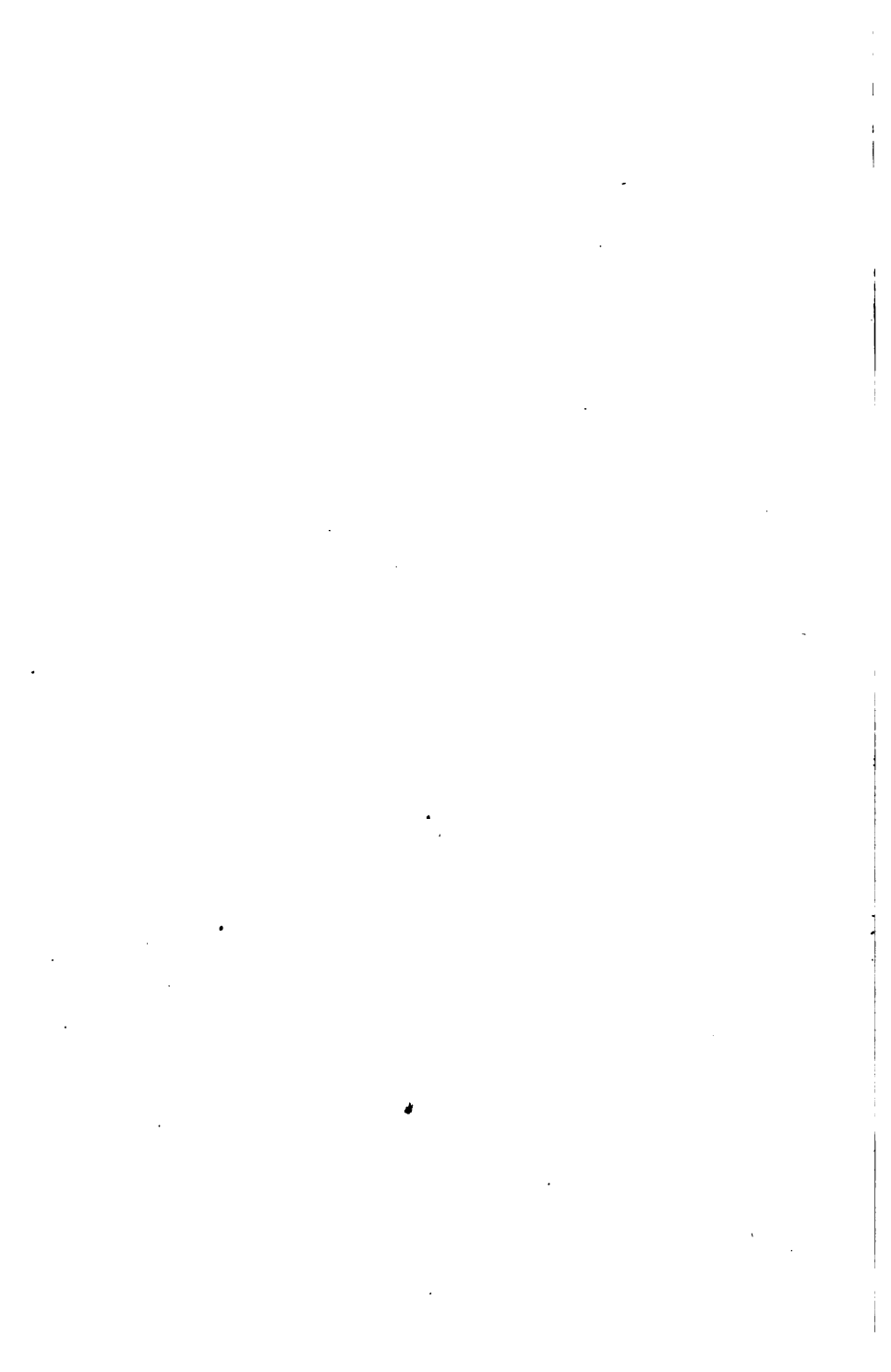
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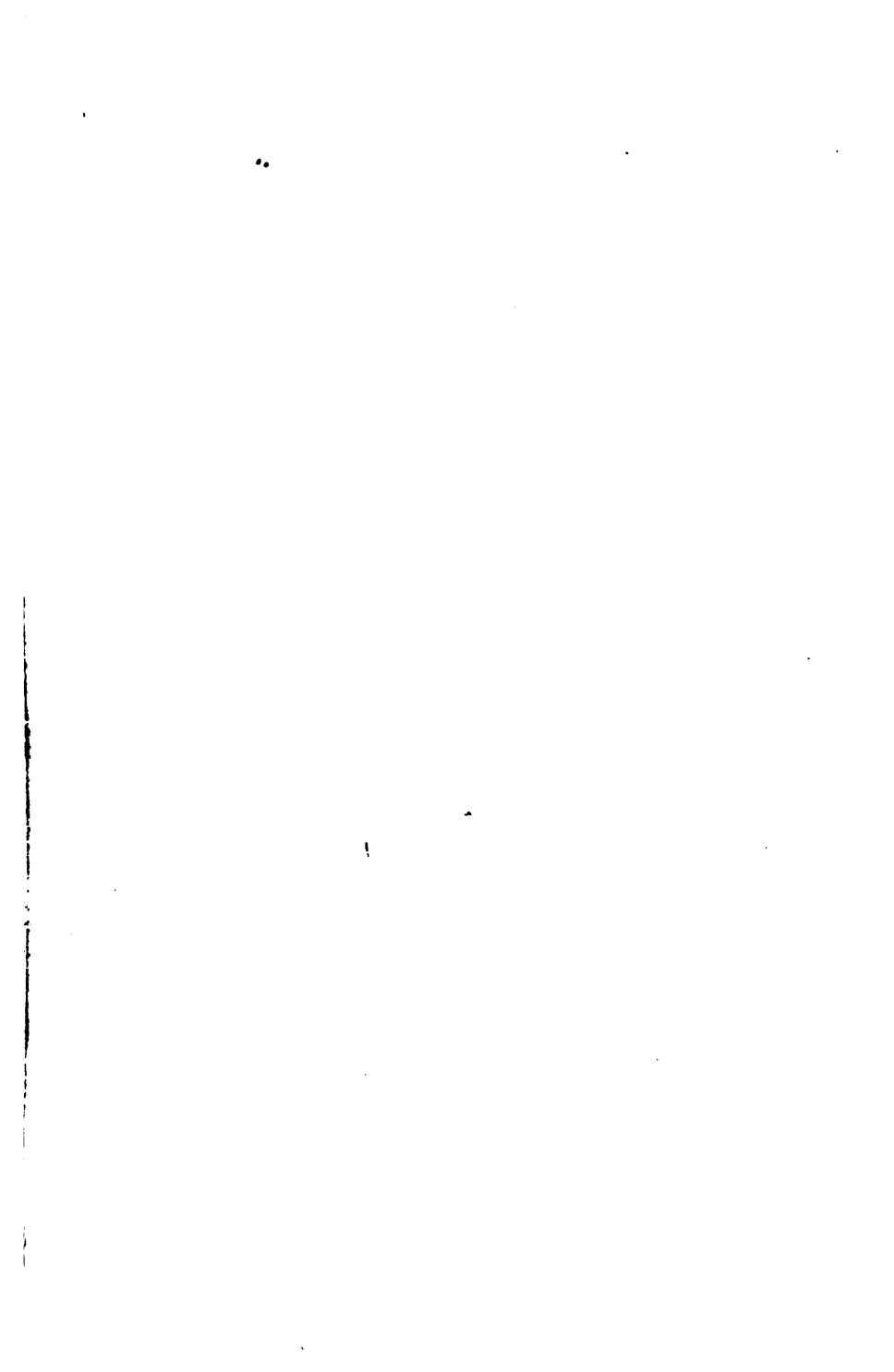
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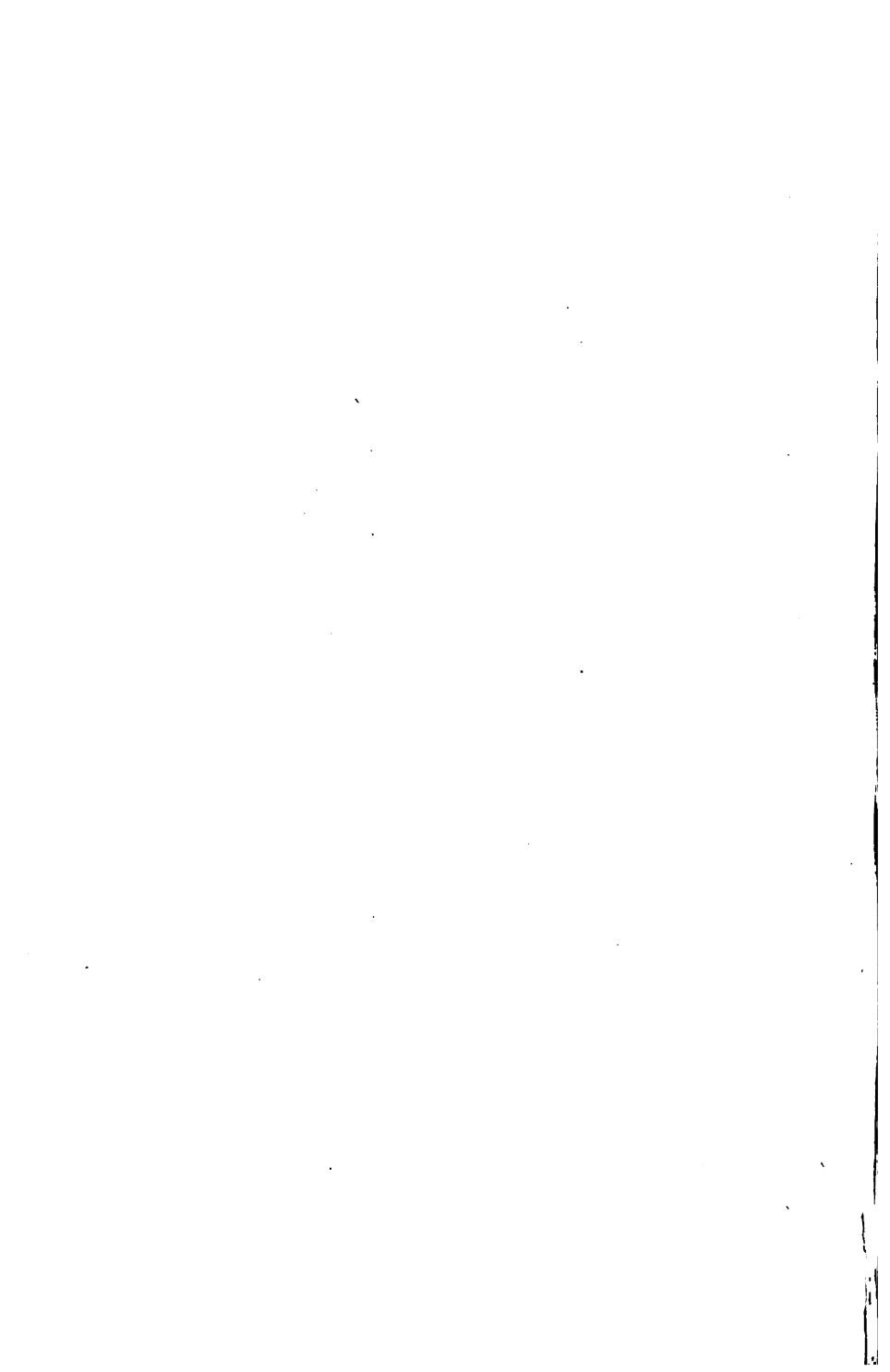
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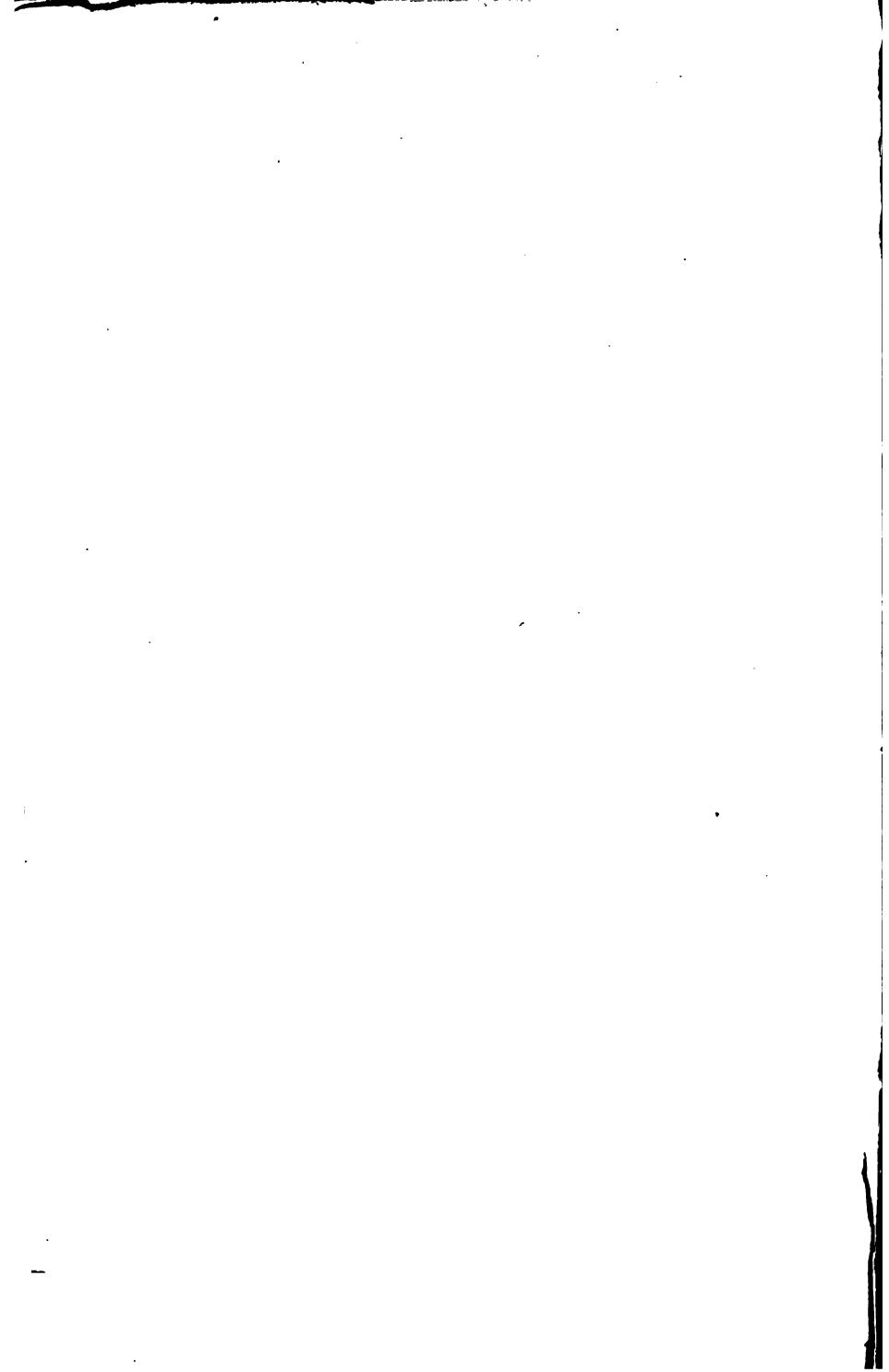


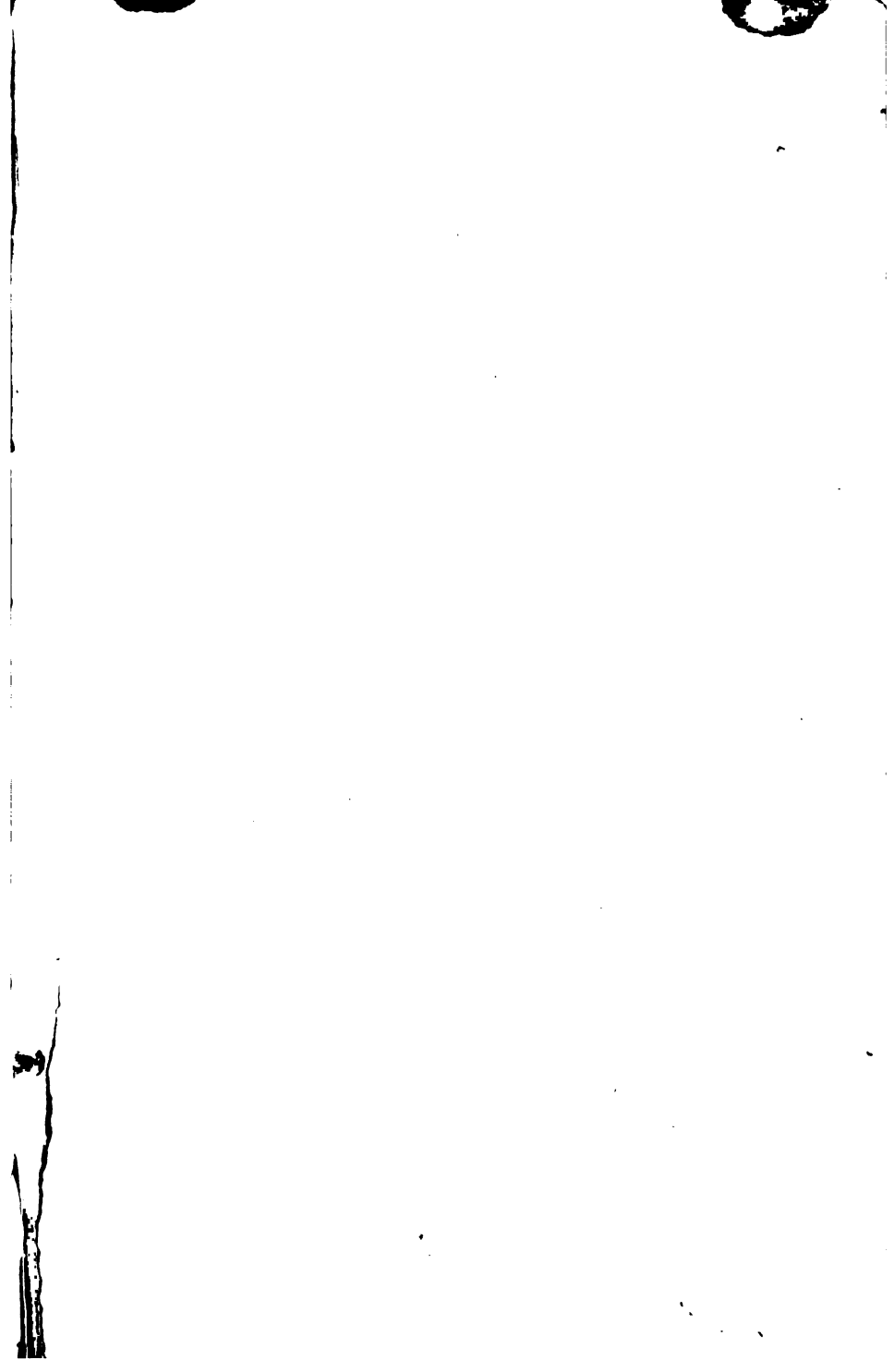


THE
DRAMATIC WORKS
OF
MOLIÈRE.



VOL. I.







M O L I E R E .

THE
DRAMATIC WORKS
OF
MOLIÈRE,

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH PROSE.

WITH SHORT INTRODUCTIONS AND EXPLANATORY NOTES.

BY
CHARLES HERON WALL,
AUTHOR OF 'THE STUDENT'S FRENCH GRAMMAR,'
ASSISTANT MASTER AT BRIGHTON COLLEGE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON: GEORGE BELL AND SONS, YORK STREET,
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PREFACE.

THIS translation is altogether a new one. Three years ago, when the work was begun, it was intended merely to revise the translation of Baker and Miller * published in the early part of the eighteenth century. But when the first volume was complete, it was found so unsatisfactory that the plan was abandoned. The publishers then entrusted the work to me.

The French edition of Molière employed for the translation is that of M. Charles Louandre. In M. Eugène Despois' edition of Molière, of which only a small part is as yet published, the scenes are not arranged as in the edition of M. Louandre. It is well that this should be noticed; but in other respects the two editions differ

* This translation is the most complete of the old ones, and contains many good and spirited renderings, side by side with strange blunders, e.g. : "*C'est que la jalousie est une chose . . . là . . . qui fait qu'on s'inquiète, et qui chasse les gens d'autour d'une maison,*" rendered by "*It's because jealousy . . . is a thing . . . which . . . makes people uneasy, and which drives them all round the house.*"—('L'École des Femmes,' Act ii., Scene ii.) "*Leur vicieuse coutume d'assassiner les gens de leurs ouvrages,*" which is rendered by "*Their vicious custom of killing people in their plays.*"—('La Critique de l'École des Femmes,' Scene vii.) "*The enmity which reigns between both parties yields there no honour,*" instead of "*The enmity which reigns between the two parties does not exclude the rights of honour.*"—('L'Impromptu de Versailles,' Sc. i.), &c.

but little in anything that affects a translation. M. Despois' notes are excellent, and throw much light upon obscure passages. Some use has been made of the edition of Lemerre, but great as is the benefit to be derived by a study of these reprints of the oldest editions of Molière when a critical study of French is the object in view, they assist but little in translation.

'La Jalousie du Barbouillé' and 'Le Médecin Volant' are translated into English for the first time.

I have availed myself of much kind help in the scenes where technical expressions occur. I owe especial thanks to Mr. Henry Jones (Cavendish) for the trouble he has taken with the game of piquet in the 'Fâcheux,' Act ii., Scene ii.,* and to Mr. Frederic Toms, Sub-editor of the 'Field,' for his revise of the stag-hunt in the same play, Act ii., Scene vii.

I have found it impossible to give to each play an English title which would convey in a brief form the spirit of the original. I feel the inadequacy of some of those which I have adopted. I hope I may meet with indulgence on this point.

* The note on p. 419 was written by him.

A BRIEF SKETCH OF MOLIÈRE'S LIFE.

JEAN-BAPTISTE POQUELIN, who afterwards took the name of Molière, was born on the 15th of January, 1622. His father, a rich upholsterer, was *tapissier valet de chambre* to the King, his brother having filled that post before him. Molière lost his mother when quite young, and became the habitual companion of his grandfather, who took him frequently to the theatre. He began early to long for knowledge—at a time when education was almost the exclusive privilege of the nobility and the clergy—and his father was at last prevailed upon to send him to school. He went to the Collège de Clermont, kept by the Jesuits, at that time (1637) the most popular school in Paris. There he had the Prince de Conti as school-fellow, and was intimate with Chapelle, Bernier, and Gassendi, who all became men of note. He distinguished himself in classics and philosophy, studied theology, and subsequently the law. Grimarest, one of his first biographers, says that he became a barrister. However this may be, when about twenty-three years of age, he left everything to take the lead of a small dramatic company, composed chiefly of sons of the wealthy *bourgeois* of Paris. Their theatre bore the pompous name of the “Illustre Théâtre.” Whether owing to the civil wars or to some other causes, they met with but little success in Paris, and Molière was even imprisoned several times for debt. At last, with part of his

company, he left Paris (1646) for the provinces, where he spent about twelve years, subject to all the vicissitudes which such a kind of life could bring, but at the same time acquiring a vast knowledge of men.

He returned to Paris in 1658, being then thirty-six years of age. He and his company—somewhat different from what it was in 1646—played for the first time before the King, Louis XIV., on the 24th of October. They first acted ‘Nicomède,’ a tragedy of Corneille. Molière then begged the King’s leave to play one of the small farces in one act which they had been in the habit of playing in the provinces. They acted the ‘Docteur Amoureux,’* which greatly amused the audience. From that time the “Illustre Théâtre” ceased to be so called; the company became “Les Comédiens de Monsieur,”† and played at the “Petit Bourbon” theatre in the Louvre.

When thirty-seven years old, Molière had as yet only produced some small farces like ‘La Jalousie du Barbouillé’ and ‘Le Médecin Volant,’ and two imperfect comedies, ‘L’Étourdi’ and ‘Le Dépit Amoureux,’ both imitated from the Italian. It was in 1659 with ‘Les Précieuses Ridicules’ that his genius really revealed itself. The success of this play was immense, and its good qualities drew forth admiration even from those who were satirized.

On the 20th of February, 1662, Molière married Armande Béjart, whom he had known quite young, and who was indebted to him for her education. He was then forty years old, she only about twenty. The marriage proved a most unhappy one; Molière was deeply in love with his wife, but she gay, fond of flattery, and very fascinating,

* This little play, like others of the kind, was never printed, and is lost.

† The King’s brother.

caused him many a sorrow. He drew from his own suffering heart those pictures of love, suspicion, and jealousy, which often called forth roars of laughter from the spectators. Alceste, in the 'Misanthrope,' is Molière who rebels against the unworthy love that enthrals a noble soul. Hence that kind of pity he shows for the very characters whose failings he brings forward.

The success of 'L'École des Maris,' 'L'École des Femmes,' 'La Critique de l'École des Femmes,' 'Don Juan,' 'Le Misanthrope,' &c., which won for him the admiration of many, and, not least, that of Louis XIV., created him numerous and bitter enemies, who in their attacks thought no weapon beneath them. They criticised his talents as an actor, they rejoiced at the bad state of his health and his domestic misfortunes, and after 'Tartufe' they even denounced him as an impious heretic fit only for the stake.* The friendship of the King could scarcely save him from their fury.

[Molière was naturally of a melancholy disposition; this his unfortunate marriage only made worse; he also suffered for many years from a very delicate chest, which compelled him to lead a most abstemious life, but nothing seems to have interfered with the activity of his mind, which grew more vigorous as the end of his life drew nearer.]

In 1670 he produced 'Les Amants Magnifiques' and 'Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme;' in 1671 'Psyché' (part of it only written by himself), 'Les Fourberies de Scapin,' and 'La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas;' in 1672, his last masterpiece, 'Les Femmes Savantes;' and a few months before his death, when fifty-one years old, 'Le Malade Imaginaire.'

* This was no idle threat; only three years before a poet had been burnt alive for having written some impious verses.

Weakened by a cough which left him no rest, and crushed by many sorrows, yet he never spared himself. On the third representation of 'Le Malade Imaginaire,' February 17th, 1673, his friends, and his wife who had been reconciled to him, entreated him not to go out. "Alas!" he said, "what can I do? I have fifty poor workmen who will be deprived of bread, if I do not play." He acted the piece through, endeavouring all the time to hide his sufferings from the spectators. He was carried to his home in the Rue de Richelieu, where he was seized with a violent fit of coughing and died a few hours afterwards.

Two priests who had been sent for, refused to come and attend him in his last agony. After his death, the Church denied him burial in consecrated ground, and the King had to issue an order for his funeral. He was buried at the dead of night, almost without the rites of religion. About a hundred of his friends, each bearing a torch, accompanied in silence the great poet to his last resting-place.

C. H. W.

Plays marked thus (O) are re-
quired for dissection

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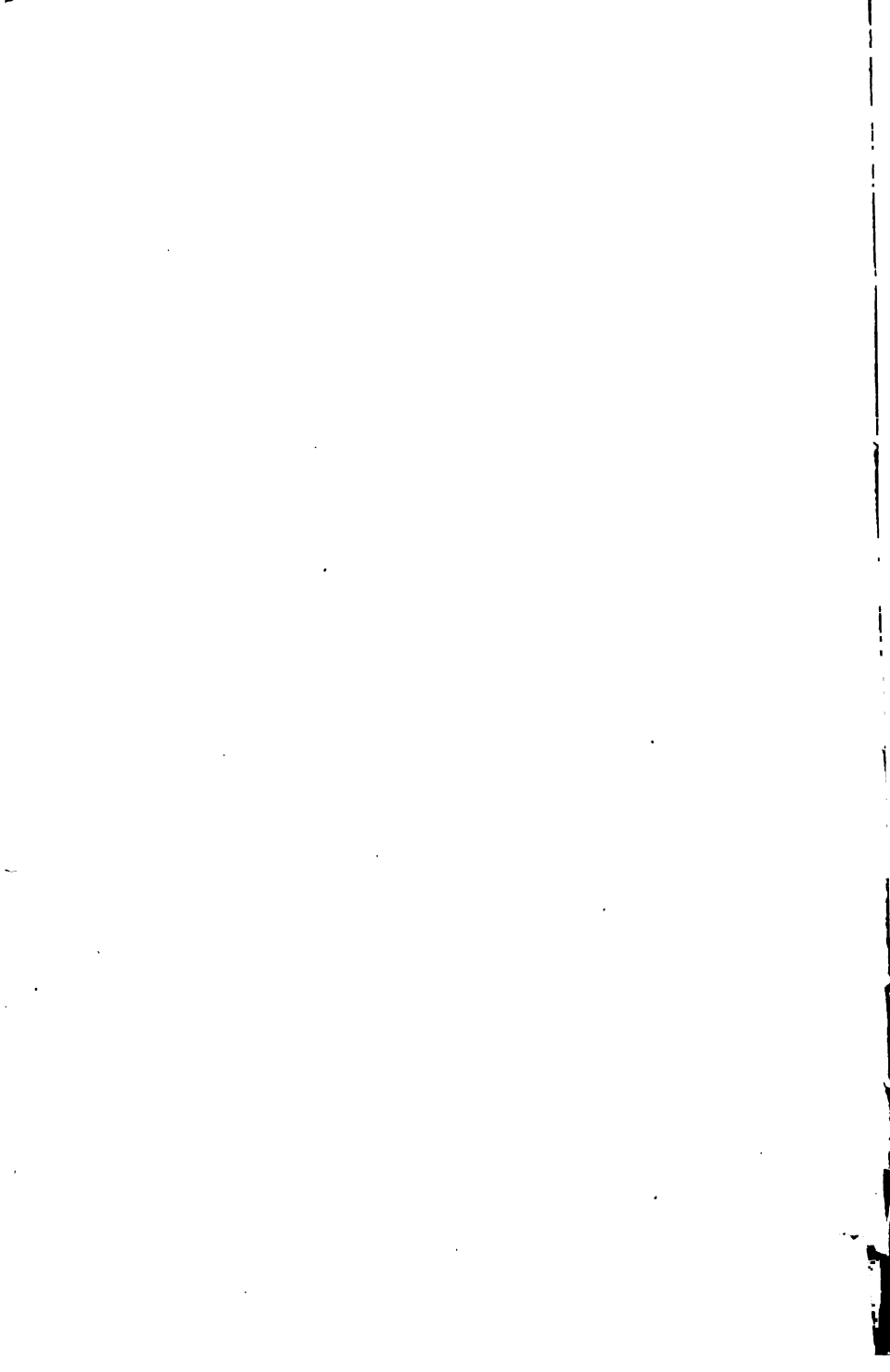
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THE JEALOUSY OF LE BARBOUILLE.

(LA JALOUSIE DU BARBOUILLE.)

Among the small farces said to have been sketched by Molière during his stay in the provinces, two only which seem genuine have come down to us, and have been published for the last thirty years with his comedies. These are, 'La Jalousie du Barbouillé,' and 'Le Médecin Volant.' Molière has made use of the former in the third act of the comedy called 'George Dandin.'

Molière acted the part of Sganarelle.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

LE BARBOUILLE, *husband to* ANGÉLIQUE.

THE DOCTOR.

ANGÉLIQUE.

VALÈRE, *lover to* ANGÉLIQUE.

CATHAU, *maid to* ANGÉLIQUE.

GORGIBUS, *father to* ANGÉLIQUE.

VILLEBREQUIN.

LA VALLÉE.

THE JEALOUSY OF LE BARBOUILLÉ.

SCENE I.—LE BARBOUILLÉ.

BAR. Everybody must acknowledge that I am the most unfortunate of men! I have a wife who plagues me to death; and who, instead of bringing me comfort and doing things as I like them to be done, makes me swear at her twenty times a day. Instead of keeping at home, she likes gadding about, eating good dinners, and passing her time with people of I don't know what description. Ah! poor Barbouillé, how much you are to be pitied! But she must be punished. Suppose you killed her? . . . It would do no good, for you would be hung afterwards. If you were to have her sent to prison? . . . The minx would find means of coming out. What the deuce are you to do?—But here is the doctor coming out this way; suppose I ask his advice on my difficulties.

SCENE II.—DOCTOR, LE BARBOUILLÉ.

BAR. I was going to fetch you, to beg for your opinion on a question of great importance to me.

DOC. You must be very ill-bred, very loutish, and very badly taught, my friend, to speak to me in that fashion, without first taking off your hat, without observing *rationem loci, temporis et personæ*. What! you begin by an abrupt speech, instead of saying *Salve, vel salvus sis, doctor doctorum eruditissime*. What do you take me for, eh?

BAR. Really, doctor, I am very sorry; the fact is that I am almost beside myself, and did not think of what I was doing; but I know you are a gallant man.

DOC. Do you know what *gallant man* comes from?

BAR. It matters little to me whether it comes from Villejuif or Aubervilliers.

DOC. Know that the word *gallant man* comes from *elegant*. By taking the *g* and the *a* of the last syllable, that makes *ga*; then by taking the two *ll*'s, adding *a* and the two last letters *nt*, that makes *gallant*; then by adding *man* you have *gallant man*. But to come back to what I said: What do you take me for?

BAR. I take you for a doctor. But let us speak a little of what I have to propose to you. You must know that

DOC. Let me tell you first that I am not only a doctor, but that I am one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, and ten times doctor. Firstly, number one is the base, the foundation, and the first of all numbers: so am I the first of all doctors, the most learned of the learned. Secondly, there are two faculties essential for a perfect knowledge of things: the sense and the understanding; I am all sense, all understanding: ergo, I am twice doctor.

BAR. Agreed. What I want

DOC. Thirdly, according to Aristotle, the number three is that of perfection; I am perfect; and every thing I do is perfect: ergo, I am three times doctor.

BAR. Very well then, doctor

DOC. Fourthly, philosophy is divided into four parts, logic, morals, physics, and metaphysics; I possess all four, and know them perfectly: ergo, I am four times doctor.

BAR. Deuce take it, I don't doubt it. Listen to me then.

DOC. Fifthly, there are five universals: the genus, the species, the differentia, the property, and the accident, without knowing which it is impossible to arrive at any satisfactory conclusions; I make great use of them, and know how important they are; ergo, I am five times doctor.

BAR. I must have patience.

DOC. Sixthly, number six is the number of work; I work incessantly for my own glory; ergo, I am six times doctor.

BAR. Well, well, speak as long as you like.

DOC. Seventhly, the number seven is the number of bliss : I possess a perfect knowledge of all that can produce happiness, and by my talents am happy myself. I am therefore forced to say of myself : *O ter quaterque beatum !* Eighthly, the number eight is the number of justice, on account of the equality which is found in it ; the justice and prudence with which I measure and weigh all my actions make me eight times doctor. Ninthly, there are nine Muses, and I am equally the favourite of them all. Tenthly, one cannot pass number ten without repeating all the other numbers, and it is the universal number. Similarly, when people have found me, they have found the universal doctor ; and I am in myself all the other doctors together. Thus, with the help of these plausible, true, demonstrative, and convincing reasons, you see that I am one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten times doctor.

BAR. What the deuce does he mean by all this ? I thought I had found a clever man who would give me good advice, and I find a chimney-sweep, who, instead of speaking to me, plays at mora.* One, two, three, four—ha ! ha !—ha ! ha ! Come, come, that's not it ; you must listen to me, and remember that I am not a man to make you lose your time ; I shall make it worth your while, and if you can satisfy me in what I want of you, I will give you what you wish—money, if you like.

DOC. Ha ! money ?

BAR. Yes, money ; and whatever you may ask besides.

DOC. (*sharply, tucking up his gown behind him*). Then you take me for a man who would do anything for money, for a man fond of money, for a mercenary soul ? Know, my friend, that if you were to give me a purse full of gold, and that this purse were in a rich box, this box in a precious case, this case in a superb chest, this chest in a rare museum, this museum in a magnificent apartment, this apartment in a gorgeous castle, this castle in a wonderful citadel, this citadel in a celebrated town, this town in a fertile

* An Italian game (Latin, *micare digitis*), in which one player suddenly raises the hand of which some fingers are shut, and some are open. The other players have to guess the number of fingers raised.

island, this island in an opulent province, this province in a flourishing monarchy, this monarchy in the whole world ; * that if you gave me the world in which this flourishing monarchy would be, in which this opulent province would be, in which this fertile island would be, in which this celebrated town would be, in which this wonderful citadel would be, in which this gorgeous castle would be, in which this pleasant apartment would be, in which this rare museum would be, in which this wonderful chest would be, in which this precious case would be, in which this rich box would be, in which the purse full of gold would be, I should care no more for it than this (*snaps his fingers and exit*).

BAR. Well, I made a mistake. Seeing him dressed as a doctor, I felt that of necessity I must speak of money to him ; but since he does not want any, nothing can be more easy than to satisfy him. I'll run after him.

(*Runs out.*)

SCENE III.—ANGÉLIQUE, VALÈRE, CATHAU.

ANG. I assure you, sir, that you will oblige me very much by coming to see me sometimes : my husband is so ugly, so ill-behaved, and such a drunkard, that it is perfect martyrdom for me to be with him, and I ask you what pleasure one can have with such a clown as he is?

VAL. You do me too much honour. I promise you I shall do my utmost to amuse you, and since you are kind enough to say that my company is not unpleasant, my care and attentions shall prove to you what pleasure this good news gives me.

CAT. Ay! quick, talk of something else; here's our old bugbear coming.

SCENE IV.—LE BARBOUILLÉ, VALÈRE, ANGÉLIQUE, CATHAU.

VAL. Mademoiselle,† I am very sorry to bring you such

* In most editions we find "*et que tout le monde où serait cette monarchie florissante,*" which has no meaning. The correct reading is "*et que tu me donnerais le monde où serait,*" &c.

† See 'Impromptu de Versailles,' Sc. i.

bad news, but you would have heard it from some one else, and since your brother is ill . . .

ANG. Ah! say no more, sir, I am your servant, and thank you very much for the trouble you have taken.

(*Exit VALÈRE.*)

BAR. Well! what need is there of my having a certificate of my cuckoldom from the notary? So! so! you trollop! I find you with a man in spite of all my remonstrances, and you want to send me from Gemini to Capricornus.

ANG. Are you going to scold me for that? This gentleman only just came to tell me of my brother's serious illness; why should you make that a subject of quarrel?

CAT. Ah, directly I saw him, I wondered if we should be long in peace.

BAR. You spoil one another, you women; you, Cathau, you corrupt my wife; she is not half as good now as she was before she had you to wait upon her.

CAT. Really you treat me in a nice manner.

ANG. Leave the drunkard alone; don't you see that he is so muddled that he does not even know what he says.

SCENE V.—GORGIBUS, VILLEBREQUIN, ANGÉLIQUE, CATHAU,
LE BARBOUILLÉ.

GOR. Now, there's my cursed son-in-law scolding my daughter again!

VILL. We must see what is the matter.

GOR. What! will you always be quarrelling! Will you never have peace at home?

BAR. This hussy calls me drunkard. (*to ANGÉLIQUE*) Here, I have a great mind to give you a good dressing* before your relations.

GOR. May the dev . . . may his money be blessed, if you have done as he says.†

* *Je suis bien tenté de te bâiller une quinte major.* Quinte major is a term of piquet. It is here employed figuratively. Compare its use in 'Les Fâcheux,' Act ii. Sc. ii.

† This seems to be the meaning of "*Je dédonne au diable l'escarcelle, si vous l'avez fait.*" *Je dédonne au diable* is apparently a euphemism

ANG. It is always he who begins to

CAT. Cursed be the hour when you chose that sordid wretch!

SCENE VI.—GORGIBUS, VILLEBREQUIN, ANGÉLIQUE, CATHAU,
LE BARBOUILLÉ, DOCTOR.

DOC. Why, what is the meaning of this? what a disorder! what a quarrel! what a racket! what a row! what a noise! what a dispute! what a combustion! What is the matter, gentlemen? what is the matter? what is the matter? Come, come, is there no way of making you agree, let me be your pacificator; suffer me to bring peace among you.

GOR. It is my son-in-law and my daughter who have had words together.

DOC. But what can it be? Now, come, let me know the cause of their dispute.

GOR. Sir

DOC. But in a few words

GOR. Yes, yes; but put on your hat.

DOC. Hat; that is bonnet. Do you know what bonnet comes from?

GOR. No.

DOC. It comes from *bonum est*, it is good, a thing which is good, because it saves one from colds and coughs.

GOR. Indeed! I did not know that.

DOC. Now quick, the subject of your quarrel?

GOR. This is what happened.

DOC. I hope you are not a man to keep me long when I pray you not to do so. I have some pressing business which calls me to town; still, if I can bring peace to your family, I am willing to stop a moment.

GOR. I shall soon have done.

DOC. Be quick, then.

GOR. It will be said in a moment.

DOC. We must acknowledge, Mr. Gorgibus, that it is a wonderful gift to be able to say things in a few words,

for *Je donne au diable*. In French, compare *parbleu*, *corbleu*, &c., and *deuce*, *zounds*, *egad*, &c., in English. *Dédonne* is not given by Littré. It occurs again in 'Le Médecin Volant,' Sc. x., but does not seem to have been employed elsewhere by Molière.

and that great talkers, instead of being heard, become often so wearisome that one cannot listen to them; *virtutem primam esse puta compescere linguam*. Yes, the best quality of an honest man is silence.

GOR. You must know then

DOC. There are three things which Socrates used to recommend particularly to his disciples: to be careful of one's actions, to be sober in eating, and to say things in a few words. Begin, Mr. Gorgibus.

GOR. It is my wish to do so.

DOC. In a few words, without ceremony, without indulging in a long speech: cut it short with an apophthegm;* quick, quick, Mr. Gorgibus, make haste, avoid prolixity.

GOR. Suffer me to speak then

DOC. That's enough Mr. Gorgibus, you speak too much. Somebody else must tell me what was the cause of their quarrel.

VILL. You must know, sir, that

DOC. You are an ignoramus, an unlearned man, ignorant of all good rules; an ass, in plain English. What! you begin a discourse without a word of exordium! Some one else must tell me what happened; will you, young lady, tell me the particulars of all this noise?

ANG. Do you see here my fat rascal, my wine-barrel of a husband

DOC. Gently, if you please, speak with respect of your husband when you are under the nose of a doctor like me.

ANG. Ah! I should just think so, doctor! I care little for you or your doctrine, and I am a doctor whenever I please.

DOC. You, a doctor when you please. A nice doctor you make. You seem to me to do much as you wish But, I say, tell me the subject of your uproar.

BAR. Sir, your honour

DOC. You begin well. "Your honour!" this word has something flattering to the ear, something full of magniloquence; "your honour!"

BAR. According to my will.

DOC. Quite right . . . "According to my will!" the

* Compare So. iv. 'Le Mariage Forcé.'

will speaks of a wish, the wish presupposes means to come to one's ends, and the end presupposes an object. It is well said, "according to my will!"

BAR. I am bursting with rage.

DOC. Cut out this word "bursting." It is a low, vulgar expression.

BAR. But, doctor, listen to me for mercy's sake.

DOC. *Audi, quæso*, would Cæsar have said.*

BAR. Seize her, or don't seize her, you will listen to me or I will break your doctoral neck! What the devil do you mean by all this?

(LE BARBOUILLÉ, ANGÉLIQUE, GORGIBUS, CATHAU, VILLEBREQUIN, *wish to explain the cause of the quarrel; the DOCTOR explains that peace is a fine thing. They all talk together, and make a dreadful noise. In the midst of all this, LE BARBOUILLÉ ties the DOCTOR by the legs with a rope, throws him down on his back, and drags him away; the DOCTOR goes on talking all the time, and counts all his arguments on his fingers, as if he were not on the ground.*)

GOR. Now, my daughter, go back to your home and live in peace with your husband.

VILL. Your servant; good night.

(*Exeunt VILLEBREQUIN, GORGIBUS, and ANGÉLIQUE.*)

SCENE VII.—VALÈRE, LA VALLÉE.

VAL. I am extremely obliged to you, sir, for the trouble you have taken, and I promise you that in about an hour's time I shall be at the place of rendezvous you give me.

LA VAL. It cannot be put off so long, in a quarter of an hour the ball will be over, and you will miss the pleasure of meeting there the person you love.

VAL. Let us go together then.

(*Exeunt VALÈRE and LA VALLÉE.*)

* Doc. 'Audi, quæso,' aurait dit Cicéron.

BAR. Si ce rompt, si ce brise, &c.

It seems necessary to ascribe the saying to Cæsar, rather than to Cicero, in order to render to some extent this fearful pun into English.

SCENE VIII.—ANGÉLIQUE (*alone*).

While my husband is absent, I will just go round to a ball given by one of our neighbours. I shall be back before him, for he is somewhere drinking; he will not even know that I am gone out. The wretched knave always leaves me alone at home, as if I were his dog.

(*Exit ANGÉLIQUE.*)

SCENE IX.—I.E. BARBOUILLÉ.

I knew that I should master that brute of a doctor and his stupid doctrine. Devil take the ignorant ass! I soon brought all his science to the ground. I must now go and see if our good wife has prepared anything for my supper.

(*Exit.*)

SCENE X.—ANGÉLIQUE.

How unlucky! I went too late, the party was over. I arrived just as everybody was leaving. But never mind, it shall be for another time. I will go home as if nothing was the matter. Bless me! the door is locked; Cathau! Cathau!

SCENE XI.—LE BARBOUILLÉ (*at the window*), ANGÉLIQUE.

BAR. "Cathau! Cathau!" Well! what is the matter with Cathau? And where do you come from at this time of night, and in such weather?

ANG. Where I come from? Just open the door, and I will tell you.

BAR. Yes, you catch me! You may go and sleep where you come from; I shall not open to a gad-about like you. What! alone at this time of night! I don't know if it is fancy, but my forehead seems to me already rougher by half.

ANG. Well, what do you mean by scolding me because I am alone? You scold me if I have anybody near me; what am I to do?

BAR. Stop at home, give orders for the supper, take care of the household, and of the children; but it is no use

talking so much; good-bye, good night, go to the devil and leave me in peace.

ANG. You won't open to me?

BAR. No, I shall not open to you.

ANG. Ah! my dear little husband, I beg of you open the door; do, my darling little heart.

BAR. Ah! crocodile! Ah! dangerous serpent! you caress me to betray me.

ANG. Open, do open.

BAR. Farewell! *Vade retro, Satanas!*

ANG. What, you won't open.

BAR. No!

ANG. You have no pity for the wife who loves you so much?

BAR. No, I am inflexible. You have offended me, I am revengeful like the very devil! that is to say plainly that I am inexorable.

ANG. Do you know that if you push me too far, and put me in a passion, I may do something which will make you repent your unkindness.

BAR. And what will you do, dear little vixen?

ANG. I declare that if you do not open to me, I will kill myself before the door; my parents will no doubt come here before going to bed, to see if we are all right together, and they will find me dead, and you will be hanged.

BAR. Ha! ha! ha! ha! the silly creature! Tell me who would lose the most? Nonsense, you are not so foolish as to play such a trick.

ANG. You don't believe me. See, here is my knife all ready, if you do not open at once I will pierce myself to the heart with it.

BAR. Take care, it is very sharp.

ANG. You won't open to me?

BAR. I have told you twenty times that I shall not open; kill yourself, die, go to the devil, I care not.

ANG. (*pretending to stab herself*). Farewell then
Ay! I am dead.

BAR. Can she be stupid enough to do such a thing? I must go down with the light and see.

ANG. (*aside*). I will pay you back. If I can only slip

into the house while you are looking for me, it shall be my turn. (*She runs past BARBOUILLÉ, and manages to get into the house without his knowledge.*)

BAR. Well! I knew she was not so stupid as all that! She is dead, and yet she runs like Pacolet's horse.* To say the truth, she really frightened me, she did right to run away, for if I had found her alive after she had given me such a fright, my boot would have taught her not to play the fool. I must go to bed now. Hallo! the wind must have shut the door to, I fear. Hi! Cathau, Cathau, open the door.

ANG. (*at the window*). "Cathau, Cathau! well what is the matter with Cathau?" and where do you come from, you drunkard? Well, well, my parents will soon be here, and will hear all about you. You wine-tap, you infamous wretch, you do not stir from the public-house; but leave a poor wife with little children waiting for you all day at home without caring to know if they want anything.

BAR. Open quickly, she-devil! or I'll break your head open.

SCENE XII.—GORGIBUS, VILLEBREQUIN, ANGÉLIQUE,
LE BARBOUILLÉ.

GOR. Why, what is it now? still quarrelling and fighting?

VILL. What? will you never agree?

ANG. Only just look at him! he is drunk, and returns at this time of night to make a noise and threaten to kill me.

GOR. She is right: it is not at this hour of night you should come home. Why can you not, like a good father of a family, come home early and live at peace with your wife?

BAR. Deuce take me, if I left the house! Ask those gentlemen who are on the terrace there. It is she who

* An enchanted dwarf in the old romance of 'Valentine and Orson,' who manufactured a wooden horse, which could go very fast. "*Courir comme le cheval de Pacolet*," remains as a proverb.

has only just come home. Ah! how innocence is always oppressed!

GOR. Well! Come, come, try to agree together, and ask her to forgive you.

BAR. I ask her to forgive me! I had rather the devil flew off with her. I am in such a terrible rage, I hardly know what to do.

GOR. Come, daughter, kiss your husband, and be friends.

SCENE XIII.—THE DOCTOR (*in night-gear at another window*).

DOC. What! always noise, disorder, dissension, quarrels, strife, disputes, uproar, everlasting altercations? What is it? What can it be? One can have no rest.

VILL. It is nothing, Mr. Doctor, every one is agreed.

DOC. Ah! about being agreed, shall I read you a chapter of Aristotle, where he proves that all the different parts of the universe subsist only through the concord which exists between them?

VILL. Will it be long?

DOC. No, it's not a bit long, only about sixty or eighty pages.

VILL. Thanks, good night, good night!

GOR. It is not necessary.

DOC. Do you wish for it?

GOR. No.

DOC. Good night, then, since it is so—*latine, bona nox*.

VILL. Let us all go and have some supper together.

THE FLYING DOCTOR.

(LE MÉDECIN VOLANT.)

'Le Médecin Volant' seems to have been acted for the first time in Paris, on the 18th of April, 1659. Parts of it were reproduced in 'L'Amour Médecin,' and 'Le Médecin malgré lui.'

Molière acted the part of Sganarelle.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.



GORGIBUS, *father to* LUCILE.

VALÈRE, *in love with* LUCILE.

SGANARELLE, *servant to* VALÈRE.

GROS-RENÉ, *valet to* GORGIBUS.

A LAWYER.

LUCILE.

SABINE, *cousin to* LUCILE.

THE FLYING DOCTOR.

SCENE I.—VALÈRE, SABINE.

VAL. Well, Sabine, what do you advise me to do?

SAB. I have really much to tell you. My uncle is bent upon marrying my cousin to Villebrequin, and things have gone so far, that I believe the wedding would have taken place to-day if you were not loved by her. However, as my cousin told me the secret of all the love she feels for you, and as we were almost driven to desperation through the avarice of our niggardly uncle, we thought of a capital device to prevent the marriage: at the present moment my cousin affects to be ill, and the foolish old man, who is easily deceived, has just sent me to fetch a doctor. Could you not find one, some friend of yours, who would be on our side, and order the invalid to go into the country for a change of air? The old man will be sure to send my cousin to live in the pavilion, which is at the bottom of our garden. In that way you will be able to see her, unknown to our uncle, and marry her; then let him and Villebrequin curse as much as they please.

VAL. But what means have I of finding so suddenly the doctor I want, and who would risk so much to serve me? I tell you frankly I know of none.

SAB. Now I think of it, why don't you have your servant dressed up as a doctor? There is no one more easy to dupe than the old fellow.

VAL. But Sganarelle is a blockhead who will spoil everything. However, as we have nobody else, we must make use of him. But where shall we find him?—Ah! here he is in the very nick of time. *(Exit SABINE.)*

SCENE II.—VALÈRE, SGANARELLE.

VAL. Ah! my poor Sganarelle, how glad I am to see you! I want your help in a most important business, but as I do not know what you can do

SGAN. What I can do, sir? Only make use of me in your more important business, in things of consequence: for instance, send me to see what time it is by the clock; send me to the market to ask the price of butter; send me to water a horse; it is then that you will be able to judge of my talents.

VAL. I ask for none of these things, I want you to play the part of a doctor.

SGAN. I, a doctor, sir! I am ready to do all you please, but as for being a doctor, I say no; I am your servant, I will be nothing of the kind. I ask you how I should set about it; goodness me, sir, you are only laughing at me.

VAL. If you will try, I will give you ten pistoles.

SGAN. Ah! ten pistoles; well, I won't say I am no doctor, for you see, sir, I am not so scrupulous as to tell you the whole truth. But supposing I am a doctor, where shall I go?

VAL. To the old man Gorgibus, to see his daughter who is ill; but you are a blockhead who, instead of doing what we want, might

SGAN. Ah! sir, don't be anxious; I'll answer for it that I can kill anybody as well as any doctor in the town. The proverb usually, is, "after death comes the doctor," but you will see that if I have anything to do with it, it will be, "after the doctor comes death!" But now, while I think of it, it must be difficult to play the doctor; and if I do nothing right ?

VAL. There will be nothing difficult to do in this case. Gorgibus is a simpleton, a boor, who will readily believe everything you say, provided you speak to him of Hippocrates, of Galen, and that you have brass enough.

SGAN. You mean that I shall have to speak of philosophy and mathematics. Leave that to me; if he is a man as easily deceived as you say, I answer for everything. You have only to find me a doctor's gown, tell me what you

expect from me, and give me my diploma, that is, my ten pistoles.

(*Exeunt VALÈRE and SGANARELLE.*)

SCENE III.—GORGIBUS, GROS-RENÉ.

GOR. Go quickly and fetch the doctor for my daughter, who is very ill; make haste!

GR.-RE. Why the deuce do you think of giving your daughter in marriage to an old man? Don't you see that it is the longing she has for a young one that makes her ill? See the attraction there is, &c.*

GOR. Go quickly! I am greatly afraid that the wedding will have to be put off on account of this illness.

GR.-RE. That is what vexes me, for I was looking forward to a good round bellyfull, and now I have to do without it.† Yes, yes, I'll go to fetch the doctor, but it is as much for my own sake as for your daughter's. I am dreadfully disappointed.

(*Exit GROS-RENÉ.*)

SCENE IV.—SABINE, GORGIBUS, SGANARELLE (*as doctor*).

SAB. I am glad to meet you, uncle, to tell you of a good piece of news: I bring the cleverest doctor in the world, a man who comes from foreign lands, who knows the most important secrets, and who will no doubt cure my cousin. He was fortunately shown to me, and I bring him to you. He is so clever, that I heartily wish I were ill, so that he might cure me.

GOR. Where is he?

SAB. Close at hand; here he is.

GOR. Doctor, I am your very humble servant. I sent for you, to come and see my daughter who is ill; I put all my hopes in you.

SGAN. Hippocrates says, and Galen too, with strong reasoning argues, that a person does not feel well when he is ill. You are right to put all your hopes in me, for I am

* The actor seems in this place to have been left to add any nonsense that came into his head. The MS. has "... &c. (*galimatias*)."

† Compare 'Le Dépit Amoureux,' Act i. Sc. i. (p. 97).

the greatest, the cleverest, the wisest doctor in the vegetable, animal, and mineral faculty.

GOR. I am delighted to hear it.

SGAN. Do not imagine that I am an ordinary doctor, a common doctor. All other doctors compared to me are abortions. I possess wonderful talents; I am master of many secrets. *Salamalec, salamalec.* "Hast thou courage, Rodrigo?" * *Signor, si; signor, non. Per omnia secula seculorum.* Still, let us see a little. (*Feels Gorgibus's pulse.*)

SAB. Eh! He is not the patient; it is his daughter who is ill.

SGAN. It does not matter: the blood of the father and that of the daughter are the same; and by the deterioration of the blood of the father, I can know the illness of the daughter.

GOR. Ah! doctor, I am greatly afraid that my daughter will die.

SGAN. S'death! she must not! she must not indeed have the pleasure of dying before she has the doctor's prescription. But, Mr. Gorgibus, can I see your daughter?

SAB. She is up; I will bring her if you like.

SCENE V.—SABINE, GORGIBUS, SGANARELLE (*as doctor*),
LUCILE.

SGAN. Well, young lady, so you are ill?

LUC. Yes, sir.

SGAN. So much the worse; it is a proof that you are not quite well. Do you feel great pains in your head and back?

LUC. Yes, sir.

SGAN. I thought so. Yes, the great doctor I spoke of, in the chapter he made on the nature of animals, said . . . a hundred fine things; and how the humours which have connexion, have much relation to each other; for instance, as melancholy is the enemy to joy, and as the bile in going through our body makes us become yellow, and as nothing is more contrary to good health than illness; so we can say with that great man that your daughter is very ill. I must give her a prescription.

* A scrap from 'Le Cid' of Corneille.

GOR. Quick! a table, paper and ink!

SGAN. Is there anybody here who can write?

GOR. What! do you not know how to write?

SGAN. Ah! I was forgetting; I have so many things to think of, that I forget the half. . . . I think it is quite necessary for your daughter to have a change of air and that she should go and enjoy herself somewhere in the country.

GOR. We have a very fine garden, and some rooms attached to it; if you think it will do, I will send her there.

SGAN. Let us go and see the place. *(Exeunt.)*

SCENE VI.—THE LAWYER.

LAW. I have heard that the daughter of Mr. Gorgibus is ill; I must go and inquire after her health, and offer my services, as the friend of the whole family. *(Knocks.)* Is Mr. Gorgibus at home? *(Enter GORGIBUS.)* Having heard of your daughter's illness, I come to tell you of my entire sympathy, and to put myself at your disposal for all that may be wanted of me.

GOR. I have just left the cleverest man in the world.

LAW. Would it not be possible to speak with him for a few moments? *(GORGIBUS fetches SGANARELLE.)*

SCENE VII.—GORGIBUS, LAWYER, SGANARELLE *(as doctor)*.

GOR. Sir, here is a friend of mine, a very clever man, who would be glad to speak with you.

SGAN. I have no leisure, Mr. Gorgibus; I must go and see my patients. I will not presume to take your place of honour, sir.

LAW. Sir, from what Mr. Gorgibus has told me of your merit and talents, I had the greatest longing in the world to be introduced to you, and I have taken the liberty of addressing you on that account. I hope you will not think it too bold. One must acknowledge that those who excel in any great science are worthy of high praise; particularly those whose calling is that of doctor, as much on account of its utility, as because it is the source of several other sciences. Hence it is a difficult one to know perfectly;

and Hippocrates therefore says truly in his first treatise : *Vita brevis, ars verò longa, occasio autem praeceps, experimentum periculosum, iudicium, difficile.*

SGAN. (to GORGIBUS). *Ficile tantina pota baril combustibus.*

LAW. You are not one of those doctors who only study the medicine called rational or dogmatic, and I believe that you practise it every day with great success,—*experientia magistra rerum.* The first men who practised medicine were held in such consideration because of that wonderful science, that they were numbered among the gods on account of the marvellous cures they performed every day. Not that any one should despise a doctor who has not given back health to his patient, since health does not altogether depend on his remedies or his knowledge : *interdum doctus plus valet arte malum.* Sir, I am afraid I am importunate ; I must leave you, with the hope that next time we meet I shall have the honour of conversing with you at greater length. Your time is precious. (Exit LAWYER.)

GOR. What do you think of that man ?

SGAN. He has some trifling knowledge of things. Had he stopped a moment longer I would have made him converse upon a lofty and sublime subject. But now I must leave you (GORGIBUS offers him money). Ha ! what are you about ?

GOR. I know that I am indebted to you.

SGAN. You are laughing, Mr. Gorgibus ! I never take any money, I am not a mercenary man (*takes the money*). Your very humble servant. (Exit SGANARELLE ;

GORGIBUS goes into his own house.)

SCENE VIII.—VALÈRE (alone).

I wonder what Sganarelle has done ; I have no news from him ; I wish I knew where to meet him (SGANARELLE returns in his usual dress). Ah ! here he is. Well ! Sganarelle, and what have you done since I saw you ?

SCENE IX.—VALÈRE, SGANARELLE.

SGAN. Worked wonders upon wonders ! I have done so well, that Gorgibus really believes me to be a clever doctor.

I went to his house, I ordered him to send his daughter to breathe fresh air, and she is now in an apartment at the bottom of their garden, so far from the old man, that you can go and see her without fear of being disturbed.

VAL. Ah! how happy you make me; I shall go at once to see her, without losing any more time. (*Exit.*)

SGAN. That old fellow Gorgibus must be a downright fool to allow himself to be deceived in that fashion (*seeing GORGIBUS*). Ah! goodness, all is lost! well, here's a pretty upset for my doctorship! But I must try and take him in once more.

SCENE X.—SGANARELLE, GORGIBUS.

GOR. Good morning, sir.

SGAN. Sir, your servant. You see in me a poor fellow driven to despair. Do you know a doctor who has only lately come to this town, and who performs wonderful cures?

GOR. Yes, I know him; he has just left my house.

SGAN. I am his brother, sir; we are twins, and we resemble each other like two peas, and are often taken the one for the other.

GOR. Dev—. . . deuce take me,* if I did not make the mistake myself; and what is your name?

SGAN. Narcissus, sir, at your service. You must know that while in his study I upset two bottles full of essence, which were on the edge of his table. Will you believe that he was so furious with me, that he actually drove me out of the house, and said he would never see me again; so that here I am a poor destitute fellow, without friends, without help, without anything at all.

GOR. Don't distress yourself; I will make your peace with your brother. I am his friend, and I promise you that he shall forgive you. I will speak to him the first time I meet him.

SGAN. I shall be much obliged to you, Mr. Gorgibus.

(*Exit SGANARELLE.*)

* See note, p. 7.

SCENE XI.—SGANARELLE (*dressed as a doctor*), GORGIBUS.

SGAN. One must say, that when patients will not follow the advice of the doctor, but give themselves up to excesses

GOR. Sir, your very humble servant. I have a favour to ask of you.

SGAN. What is it, sir? Can I be of service to you?

GOR. Sir, I have just met your brother, who is extremely sorry to

SGAN. He is a scoundrel, Mr. Gorgibus.

GOR. I assure you that he is so distressed to have put you in a passion, that

SGAN. He is a drunkard, Mr. Gorgibus.

GOR. Eh! sir, do you wish to drive the poor fellow to despair?

SGAN. Do not speak to me of him. Just fancy that scoundrel's impudence to go and ask you to make his peace for him. I beg of you not to speak of him to me.

GOR. In Heaven's name, sir, do it for my sake! If it is in my power to do anything to oblige you in return, I will do it with all my heart. I gave him my word, and

SGAN. You entreat me so much, that although I swore I would never forgive him, here, shake hands, I forgive him. I assure you that I impose a great restraint upon myself, and that I must have great regard for you. Farewell, Mr. Gorgibus.

(GORGIBUS goes into his house;
exit SGANARELLE.)

SCENE XII.—VALÈRE, SGANARELLE.

VAL. I am forced to acknowledge that I should never have thought that Sganarelle could have done so well. (SGANARELLE returns in his servant's dress) Ah! my dear fellow, under what obligation I am to you! how happy I am! and how

SGAN. Yes, this is all very well, but Gorgibus met me, and if it had not been for a trick I thought of on the spur of the moment, all would have been discovered. (*seeing GORGIBUS*) Run away; here he is. (*Exit VALÈRE.*)

SCENE XIII.—GORGIBUS, SGANARELLE.

GOR. I was looking for you everywhere to tell you that I have spoken to your brother. He has promised me that he will forgive you, but in order that I may be more sure of it, I want him to embrace you in my presence; step into my house, I will go and fetch him.

SGAN. But, Mr. Gorgibus, I don't think you could find him now; besides, I should not like to stop in your house; I dread his anger too much.

GOR. Indeed! you will stay there, for I shall lock you in. I am going now to fetch your brother; fear nothing; I assure you that he is no longer angry.

(Exit GORGIBUS.)

SGAN. (*at the window*). Well! I am caught this time. I see no way of escape. The clouds are very dark, and I greatly fear that, if they break, they will rain hard blows on my back; or that by a prescription stronger even than that of all the doctors, they will apply a royal cauter^y* to my shoulders. But why should I despair? Since I have done so much, I must go on to the end. Yes, yes; I must get clear of all this, and show that Sganarelle is the king of rogues.

(SGANARELLE jumps out of the window and runs away.)

SCENE XIV.—GROS-RENÉ, GORGIBUS, SGANARELLE.

GR.-RE. Upon my word this is funny! How people jump out of the windows in this place! I must just stop here and see what comes of it. (*Hides.*)

GOR. I cannot find the doctor; I wonder where he went to hide himself. (*seeing SGANARELLE returning with his doctor's gown*) Ah! here he is. It is not sufficient, sir, to have forgiven your brother, I beg you to give me the satisfaction of seeing you embrace him. He is in my house; I was looking everywhere for you, to ask you to make your peace with him in my presence.

SGAN. You are joking, Mr. Gorgibus; is it not sufficient

* *I.e.* brand.

that I should have forgiven him? I will never see him again.

GOR. Do it for my sake, sir, I pray.

SGAN. I can refuse you nothing: tell him to come down (*while GORGIBUS goes into the house by the door, SGANARELLE goes in by the window*).

GOR. (*at the window*). Here is your brother waiting for you yonder; he has promised me that he will do all you like.

SGAN. (*at the window*). Mr. Gorgibus, I beg of you to make him come here; let me see him, and ask him, in private, to forgive me, for no doubt he would treat me roughly, and would shame me before everybody.

(*GORGIBUS comes out of his house by the door; SGANARELLE by the window.*)

GOR. Very well, I will tell him. Sir, he says that he is thoroughly ashamed, and he begs you to come in, so that he may ask you in private to forgive him. Here is the key, you may come in. I beg of you not to refuse me, but give me this satisfaction.

SGAN. There is nothing I can refuse you. You will hear how I will speak to him. (*within the house*) Ah! so you are here, scoundrel!— My brother, I beg your pardon, I assure you it was not my fault.— Profligate wretch! I will teach you to dare importune Mr. Gorgibus, and plague him with your absurdities!— Ah! my brother — Hold your tongue, I tell you. — I would not disoblige . . . — . . Be silent, rascal . . —

GR.-RE. (*coming forward*). Who do you think is in your house at present?

GOR. Why! it is the Doctor with his brother Narcissus; they have had a quarrel, but they are making it up.

GR.-RE. Deuce take it, if they are more than one!

SGAN. (*within the house*) Drunkard that you are! I will teach you how to behave.—He may well look down! He feels he has done wrong, the good-for-nothing scoundrel! Ah, the hypocrite, how he pretends to be good!

GR.-RE. (*to GORGIBUS*). . Sir, do ask him, just for fun, to make his brother show himself at the window.

GOR. Very well. Sir, pray make your brother show himself at the window.

SGAN. (*from the window*). He is unworthy of being seen by honourable people; and, besides, I could not bear to have him by the side of me.

GOR. Sir, do not refuse me this favour, after all those you have granted me.

SGAN. (*from the window*). Truly, Mr. Gorgibus, you have so much power over me that I can refuse you nothing. Show yourself, scoundrel! (*after having disappeared one moment, he reappears as a valet.*) Mr. Gorgibus, I am so much indebted to you. (*Disappears, and reappears again as doctor.*) Well, did you see that picture of drunkenness?

GR.-RE. (*to GORGIBUS*). I know they are but one, and to prove it, tell him that you want to see them both together.

GOR. But grant me the favour of showing yourself with him, and of embracing him at the window before me.

SGAN. (*from the window*). It is a thing I would refuse to any one but you; but, to show you that I would do anything for your sake, I consent, though with difficulty, and I wish that he should first ask you to forgive him for the trouble he has given you.—Yes, Mr. Gorgibus, I beg your pardon for having troubled you so much; and I promise you, my brother, in the presence of Mr. Gorgibus, to be so careful in future that you will never have reason to complain. I beg of you not to think any more of what is past (*he kisses his hat and his ruff, which he has put at the end of his elbow*).

GOR. Well, did you not see them both?

GR.-RE. Upon my word, he is a sorcerer!

SGAN. (*coming out of the house as doctor*). I give you back the key of your house, sir. I do not wish this scoundrel to come down with me, for he makes me ashamed of him. I would not, for anything, that he should be seen with me in this town, where I have some reputation. You can send him away when you please. I wish you good morning, and am your humble servant (*feigns to go, but, after having thrown down his gown, enters the house by the window*).

GOR. I must go, and set this poor fellow free. To say the truth, if his brother has forgiven him, it is not before

ill-treating him very much (*goes into his house, and comes out with SGANARELLE as a servant*).

SGAN. I thank you very much, sir, for the trouble you have taken and the kindness you have shown me. I shall be obliged to you for it all my life.

GR.-RE. (*to GORGIBUS*). Where do you think the doctor is now?

GOR. He is gone away.

GR.-RE. (*who has picked up SGANARELLE's gown*). I hold him under my arm. There is the knave who played the doctor and deceived you; and, while he is deceiving you and playing you off, Valère and your daughter are together, doing all they like.

GOR. Ah! how unfortunate I am! But you shall be hanged! you knave! you scoundrel!

SGAN. Why, sir, what good will it do you to hang me? Hear a word or two, I beg of you. It is true that, thanks to my stratagem, my master is with your daughter; but, while serving him, I have done you no wrong. It is a good match for her, both as to birth and money. Believe me, do not make a scandal which would turn to your shame; but send this knave here to the devil along with Villebrequin. But here are our lovers.

SCENE XV.—VALÈRE, LUCILE, GORGIBUS, SGANARELLE.

VAL. We come to ask you to forgive us.

GOR. I forgive you; and, on seeing such a good son-in-law, think myself happily deceived by Sganarelle. Now, let us all go to the wedding, and drink the health of the company.

THE BLUNDERER;

OR, THE MISHAPS.

(L'ÉTOURDI, OU LES CONTRE-TEMPS.)

'L'Étourdi' was acted for the first time in Lyons, either in 1653 or 1655. Played in Paris in the Louvre, in 1658, before the king, it obtained the greatest success.

Molière took the part of Mascarille.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.



PANDOLFE, *father to LÉLIE.*

ANSELME, *father to HIPPOLYTE.*

TRUFALDIN, *an old man.*

CÉLIE, *a slave belonging to TRUFALDIN.*

HIPPOLYTE, *daughter to ANSELME.*

LÉLIE, *son to PANDOLFE.*

LÉANDRE, *a young man of good family.*

ANDRÉ, *a supposed gipsy.*

MASCARILLE, *servant to LÉLIE.*

ERGASTE, *a friend of MASCARILLE.*

A Messenger.

Two Companies of Masqueraders.

The scene is at MESSINA, in a public place.

THE BLUNDERER.



ACT I.

SCENE I.—LÉLIE.

VERY well, Léandre, let it be so! We will have a struggle for it; we will see which of us two will carry the day; which of us two, in our common pursuit of this lovely girl, can best thwart the addresses of his rival. But, muster your forces, prepare for a hard fight, for I assure you that on my side nothing shall be left undone.

SCENE II.—LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

LEL. Ah! Mascarille!

MASC. What is the matter?

LEL. Matter enough! Everything goes wrong in my love affairs. I have just heard that Léandre is in love with Célie, so that, although I have now changed the object of my desires, he is again my rival.

MASC. Léandre in love with Célie?

LEL. He adores her, I tell you.

MASC. So much the worse.

LEL. So much the worse, indeed; and that's what puts me out. But I will not despair, I will take heart again; for have I not you to help me, Mascarille—you, so clever in intrigues; you who have never found anything difficult; you who deserve to be called the prince of servants, and who in the whole world

MASC. A truce to your compliments! Thus it always is; when you masters have need of us poor slaves, there is no end to your praise. We are the much beloved, the wonders of this world; but let there be the slightest

cause for displeasure and, lo! we are rascals and scoundrels, who deserve a good thrashing.

LEL. Nay, you wrong me.—But let us talk together for a moment of the beautiful slave. Tell me if the coldest, the most cruel heart could resist the power of her lovely charms? As for me, when I look at her, when I hear her talk, I feel that she is not what she seems, and that her lowly station must hide a noble birth!

MASC. Very romantic! But what will Pandolfe say to all this? He is your father,—at least he says so. You know that your behaviour puts him pretty often out of temper, and that he frets and fumes against you in fine style. You know besides, that he is arranging a marriage for you with Anselme, whose daughter he wishes to give you for a wife, for he believes that nothing but marriage can make a steady man of you. What will he do when he hears that you refuse the girl he has chosen for you, and that it is the love you have for a person of whom nobody knows anything, which makes you forget your duty of obedience to him? God knows what a storm will burst over your head, and with what fine lectures you will be entertained.

LEL. There! there! An end to all your speechifying!

MASC. An end rather to your design. It has not much to recommend it, and you would do better if

LEL. I thought by this time you might have been aware that nothing is gained by making me angry, that I have no taste for advice, and that the servant who takes upon himself to sermonise me, acts altogether against his own interests.

MASC. (*aside*). He is getting into a rage. (*aloud*) All I said was only in fun, and to try you. Do I look, then, like a stern reformer, and does Mascarille oppose that which is natural? You know that I do not, and that the only reproach you can make me is that I am too good-natured.—No, believe me, do not listen to the lectures of your old greybeard of a father; follow your whim, and laugh at his advice. In very truth, my opinion is that those decrepit old dotards only try to deceive us with their silly stories; and that, forced to be virtuous, they hope to deprive young people, out of sheer envy, of all

the pleasures of life. You know my talents, dispose of me.

LEL. That's better! But to proceed: you must know that when I first declared my passion, it was not disdained by the sweet girl who had inspired it. But, now that Léandre has threatened me that he will carry her off, no time is to be lost. Ransack your brains to find the speediest means of securing her for me. Plan any trick, invent any subterfuge, find any stratagem, but frustrate, by some means, the pretensions of my rival.

MASC. Let me think awhile. (*aside*) What can I possibly invent?

LEL. Well, the stratagem?

MASC. One moment! You go too fast; my brain moves more leisurely. I have it! You must . . . no, that won't do. But if you would go . . .

LEL. Where?

MASC. That's but a poor device. I thought of one . . .

LEL. What was it?

MASC. It would not succeed. But could you not . . . ?

LEL. Could I not what?

MASC. No. You could do nothing. Speak to Anselme.

LEL. And what can I say to him?

MASC. Quite true, that would be falling out of the frying-pan into the fire. Yet we must have her. Go to Trufaldin.

LEL. What to do?

MASC. I don't know.

LEL. Come, this is too bad! You will drive me mad with your idle talk.

MASC. Well, you know that if you could command a good round sum of money, there would be no need for us to stand here speculating upon the best means of securing your object; we would go and purchase the slave off hand, and thus effectually prevent your rival from thwarting you by being first. I know that Trufaldin is rather uneasy about those gipsies who placed her with him,* and that he is anxious about his money, which they are a long time bringing him. If he could only get this money back

* As security for the money lent (see Act v. Sc. iii.)

again, I have not the slightest doubt that he would be but too delighted to sell her, for he has always lived like a sordid miser. He would consent to be whipped for less than sixpence, and money is the god he worships! Unfortunately, it so happens that

LEL. That ?

MASC. That your father is almost as bad. He won't allow you to handle his ducats at your pleasure; and I don't know of a single purse, however small, that would open at your command. But let us try to speak to Célie, and find out what she thinks. Her window looks this way.

LEL. Be cautious, for Trufaldin keeps watch day and night over her.

MASC. Let us stand still, and wait in this corner
What luck! here she comes.

SCENE III.—CÉLIE, LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

LEL. Ah! what thanks I owe to Heaven, for offering to my sight the celestial charms it has bestowed upon you! Great though the suffering which those eyes have caused me, greater still is the delight I feel at being able once more to gaze upon them!

CEL. My heart, with reason, is surprised at your words; it has never wished that my eyes should pain anyone; and if they have in any way injured you, believe that it was entirely without my leave.

LEL. Oh! I do not complain, their glances are too charming to cause me any injury! I esteem it a supreme happiness to cherish the wounds they make, and

MASC. You are rather losing yourself in the clouds; this is not exactly the style we have need of here; let us spend our time more to the purpose, and quickly ask her what

TRUF. (*within*). Célie!

MASC. (*to LÉLIE*). I told you so!

LEL. O cruel fate! Why must this wretched old man come and interrupt us!

MASC. Leave us. I will find something to say to him.
(*LÉLIE hides.*)

SCENE IV.—TRUFALDIN, CÉLIE, MASCARILLE, LÉLIE (*hiding*).

TRUF. (*to CÉLIE*). What are you doing out of doors? What can possibly bring you here? Have I not forbidden you to speak to anybody?

CEL. Pray do not be angry; I made the acquaintance of this honest fellow some time ago, and there is no occasion for you to suspect him.

MASC. Is this Signor Trufaldin?

CEL. Yes.

MASC. Sir, I am your most humble servant. It gives me extreme pleasure to pay my respects to a man whose name is so well known.

TRUF. Sir, your very humble servant.

MASC. I am intruding perhaps, but I have met with this young lady before. I have learnt how well skilled she is in the art of predicting the future, and I have therefore come to consult her on a certain subject.

TRUF. (*to CÉLIE*). What! Do you deal in the supernatural?

CEL. No, such magic as I have is purely natural.*

MASC. I will briefly state the case. The master whose servant I am, has lost his heart. He would fain tell the beauty he adores of the flame that burns within him, but a wakeful dragon, that watches over this treasure, has till now rendered all his attempts unavailing. To complete his misery, he has just discovered that he has a dangerous rival. Now, his great anxiety is to know whether he may still hope for success in his love. I have therefore come to consult you, for I feel sure that from your lips alone can I learn the truth.

CEL. Under what planet was your master born?

MASC. Under a planet which makes his love unchangeable.

CEL. There is no need for you to name the object of his passion; the science I possess enlightens me sufficiently. Tell him that this young girl has a proud heart, and that although she is now in adversity, she still knows

* Or, more literally, "Do you deal in the black art?—No, I only understand white magic."

how to preserve her self-respect. She is not of a disposition to disclose too freely her secret feelings, but I have full knowledge of them, and I will in a few words impart them all to you.

MASC. Oh! wondrous power of magic!

CEL. If your master can really be constant in his affection, and if his motives are such as virtue can approve, tell him to be under no fear of loving in vain; there is room for hope, and the fortress he wishes to take, is not averse from parley, but is, on the contrary, rather inclined to capitulation.

MASC. That is a great deal; but this fortress depends on a governor who is hard to gain over.

CEL. There lies all the difficulty.

MASC. (*aside, looking at LÉLIE*). Dence take the foolish fellow! how narrowly he watches us!

CEL. And now listen to what you ought to do

LÉL. (*joining them*). Pray, Trufaldin, do not get uneasy; it is in obedience to my orders that this trusty servant has come to see you. I sent him to offer you my services, and to treat with you concerning this young lady, whose ransom I wish to pay, provided we can come to terms.

MASC. (*aside*). Plague take the ass!

TRUF. So! So! Which of the two am I to believe? This story strangely contradicts the other one.

MASC. This gentleman is not quite right in his head; did you not know it?

TRUF. I know what I know; you are up to something, I fear. (*to CÉLIE*) Go in, and never take such a liberty again. As for you two arrant knaves—or I am greatly mistaken—if ever again you want to play upon me, make up your mind beforehand as to the tune. (*Exit.*)

SCENE V.—LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

MASC. Well done! To speak the plain truth, I only wish that he had soundly thrashed us both into the bargain! What need was there for your showing yourself? What need for you to come, like a blunderer that you are, and give the lie to all I had been saying?

LÉL. I thought I did right.

MASC. Of course you did! I might have expected as much from you! You're such a confirmed marplot, that people have ceased to wonder at your freaks.

LEL. Surely the offence was small enough; and you need not make so much of it! Is there no means of retrieving such a little mishap? Any how, if you do not see your way to giving me Célie, at least try to thwart my rival's schemes, and prevent him from buying this slave before I do. For fear my presence should still prove mischievous, I'll retire.

MASC. It is the best thing you can do. (*Exit LÉLIE.*) There is no doubt that money would prove the safest and surest agent in this business; but, as it fails us, we must think of something else.

SCENE VI.—ANSELME (*a purse at his side*), MASCARILLE.

ANS. Upon my word, ours is a strange age! I am ashamed of it! Never was there such a love of money: never such difficulty in getting back one's own. Whatever care we may take, debts are now-a-days like children, begot with pleasure, but brought forth with pain. It is delightful enough to feel money coming into our purse, but when the time comes that we are to deliver it up again, then it is that the pangs of labour seize fast upon us, and we groan. Still, I have got back the eighty pounds which have been owing to me for the last two years; I must be thankful for small mercies.

MASC. (*aside*). Oh! Oh! What fine game to shoot on the wing! Soft's the word; I must get a little nearer. I know pretty well the sweet lullaby wherewith to soothe him. (*Joining ANSELME*) Anselme, I have just seen . . .

ANS. Seen whom?

MASC. Your Nerina.

ANS. Have you? And what does the cruel one say of me?

MASC. She loves you more than ever.

ANS. She does?

MASC. She loves you so, that it breaks one's heart to see her suffer.

ANS. How happy you make me!

MASC. Love is nearly killing the poor thing. "Anselme, my darling," she cries, "when will marriage unite our hearts? When will you vouchsafe to quench these flames which devour me?"

ANS. But why has she concealed this from me till now? Truly women are great dissemblers! After all, Mascarille, what do you think? Although old, my good looks have not yet left me; I have yet wherewith to please the eye.

MASC. Decidedly. That face of yours is still not amiss; if it is not of the handsomest, it's at least agreeable.*

ANS. So that?

MASC. (*trying to take the purse*). So that she dotes on you, and considers you now as

ANS. As what?

MASC. As her husband; and intends

ANS. Intends?

MASC. Intends, happen what may, to steal a purse from you.

ANS. Steal what?

MASC. (*taking the purse, and letting it slide to the ground*). To steal a buss from you.†

ANS. Ah! I understand you. I say, when next you see her, you will say a good word for me, will you not?

MASC. Trust me.

ANS. Good-bye!

MASC. May Heaven protect you!

ANS. (*coming back*). Really, I was acting in a strange manner, and you might well have accused me of neglect. Here am I asking you to assist me in my love, you give me good news, and I do not think of rewarding your zeal! Here! be sure you remember

MASC. No, no, I beg of you, pray don't!

ANS. Allow me

MASC. I won't hear of such a thing! I don't do this for the sake of money.

* Il est des agréables (désagréable).

† MASC. Et vous veut, quoiqu'il tienne, prendre la bourse.

ANS. La . . . ?

MASC. La bouche avec la sienne.

There is a play on these two words.

ANS. I know it; but still

MASC. No, sir, I will not. You offend me.

ANS. Good-bye, then, Mascarille.

MASC. (*aside*). When will he cease talking?

ANS. (*coming back*). I wish you to take to the dear girl some slight token of my love. Let me give you enough to buy her a ring, or some other trinket that you may think proper.

MASC. No, no! leave your money alone, and do not trouble yourself. Since you wish it, I will make her a present of a fashionable ring that was left with me this morning, and, if it fits her, you shall pay me for it afterwards.

ANS. Do so; and mind, above all things, you encourage her in the good opinion she has of me, and in her desire of making me her own. (*Enter LÉLIE.*)

SCENE VII.—LÉLIE, ANSELME, MASCARILLE.

LEL. (*taking up the purse*). Whose purse is this?

ANS. Good Heavens! I had dropped it; and afterwards I should have said that it had been stolen from me. I am extremely obliged to you for your kindness; it has saved me a deal of anxiety. Without you, I might never have seen my money again. I shall go home this minute, and put it safely away. (*Exit.*)

SCENE VIII.—LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

MASC. Hang me, if I ever saw such officiousness!

LEL. Why, but for me he would have lost his money.

MASC. There's no denying it, you do wonders, and have shown to-day most exquisite judgment, followed of course by supreme good fortune. Go on as you have begun; we shall thrive apace.

LEL. What have I done, now?

MASC. What you have done? Why, acted the fool, if you will have it in plain English. You know that your father will give you no money. You know that we are greatly pressed by a formidable rival; and yet when,

to oblige you, I have recourse to a bold stratagem, of which I alone bear the shame and danger

LEL. What! Was it?

MASC. Yes, simpleton, it was to buy Célie, that I had seized the money, which you gave back with so much grace.

LEL. If that is the case, I was in the wrong; but how could I guess?

MASC. Oh, no doubt, it required exceptional discernment!

LEL. You should have made me some sign to warn me of what was going on.

MASC. No doubt, I ought to have my optics* behind me. Leave me alone, and let's have no more of your stupid excuses! Another man, after this, would give up the affair altogether; but as just a minute ago, I thought of a masterly piece of roguery, I should like to see how it works; only mind, if

LEL. No, I promise you I won't interfere any more. I will say nothing, do nothing.

MASC. Mind you don't! Now go, pray go. The very sight of you kindles my wrath.

LEL. Lose no time for fear that in this business

MASC. Once more, go, I tell you; I will set to work immediately. (*Exit LÉLIE.*) I must be prudent. It will be exquisite, if it succeeds; and it can't help succeeding! To begin with Good! here is the very man!

SCENE IX.—PANDOLFE, MASCARILLE.

PAND. Mascarille!

MASC. Sir!

PAND. To speak to you plainly, I am far from pleased with my son.

MASC. With my master? Ah! to whom do you say that, sir? You are not the only one who complains, I can tell you; and his evil doings have well-nigh worn out my patience.

PAND. That is strange, I thought that you two had a full understanding in all matters which

* Je devais au dos avoir mon lumineux.

MASC. Do not believe it, sir; we are always picking a bone about something, and not a day passes but I try to remind him of his duty. Only a few minutes ago we had a quarrel about his engagement with Hippolyte; for he rebels against it. By such disobedience he violates all the respect due to you his father.

PAND. You had a quarrel?

MASC. Yes, and a very serious one too.

PAND. I have been greatly deceived then, for I thought that you were always ready to encourage him in whatever he did.

MASC. I encourage him! Just see the wickedness of the world, and how innocence is always oppressed. If my uprightness were known to you, although I am but his servant, you would give me the additional pay of a tutor. You, yourself, could not admonish him more than I do, in order to bring him to reason. "For Heaven's sake, sir," I often say to him, "cease to be driven by the first wind that blows; do settle down. Look what a worthy father Heaven has bestowed upon you, and what a reputation he has in the world; forbear to grieve him to the very soul, and live, as he does, like a man of honour."

PAND. That is rightly spoken; and what does he answer to that?

MASC. Answer? Why all kinds of nonsense, with which he tries to overpower my arguments. Mind, I do not say that at the bottom of his heart, he has not retained those principles of honour for which he is indebted to you; but the fact is, the poor fellow is no longer governed by reason and common sense. If I could speak out freely, and give advice, I believe you would soon see him an altered man.

PAND. Pray speak out.

MASC. It is a secret which would cost me dear if it were discovered, but I feel sure that I can trust it with safety to your discretion.

PAND. You may rest quite satisfied about that.

MASC. Know, then, that the love your son has for a certain slave, exceeds the respect he has for your wishes.

PAND. I have been told of this before, Mascarille, but it comes home to me, when it is you that tell it me.

MASC. You can judge if I am the secret confidant

PAND. I am glad to see you are not.

MASC. In the meantime, if you really wish to bring him back quietly to the path of duty, you must I am terribly afraid of being overheard, for it would be all over with me if he knew of this you must, I say, in order to cut short all his schemes, secretly buy his beloved slave, and send her away to some far-off country. Anselme knows Trufaldin very well; let him go and buy her for you this very morning. Afterwards, if you are willing to trust her to me, I know some slave-merchants to whom I can sell her. I can promise in this way to make good to you the money she costs you, and to send her out of the way, in spite of your son. If you wish him to enter the bonds of matrimony, we must steer clear of this growing love, for however willing he may be to submit to you, and to accept the yoke you would put on him, the sight of this girl might renew his flame, and prove a great hindrance to the happiness of his married life.

PAND. Fairly put! Your advice pleases me greatly.—Here comes Anselme. Go, now; I will do my best quickly to get possession of this troublesome slave, and to put her into your hands; you can then manage the rest. (*Exit.*)

MASC. Famous! Now to inform my master of all this, Long live knaves and their knavish tricks!

SCENE X.—HIPPOLYTE, MASCARILLE.

HIP. So this is your way of serving me, you faithless rascal! I overheard everything myself, and saw your false dealings! If I had not, I could never have believed it! You promised me that you would serve my love for Léandre, and I had a right to expect that with your skill and management you would find means to break off the engagement with Lélie, which my father wishes to force on me. You have deceived me, miscreant! But you will find yourself mistaken; I know a sure way of preventing the purchase you so eagerly recommend, and I will go immediately

MASC. How hasty you are! You fly into a passion, without giving yourself time to inquire if you are right or

wrong. Why thus, in a moment, get angry with me?— Since you so insult me, I really have a great mind to let you go your own way, to make your words true, and to leave undone what I have begun.

HIP. And what can you invent to make me believe the contrary of what I heard and saw? Do you mean to deny it?

MASC. Deny it? Oh dear no! But you might have inquired if all this plotting was not meant to serve you. Know then, that the piece of advice, given so innocently, will make both old men fall into the snare, and that if I want them to trust me with Célie, it is only that I may secure her for Lélie, and so arrange matters, that Anselme, furious at being imposed upon, and deprived of his son-in-law, may in his rage turn his choice upon Léandre.

HIP. What! this great project which made me so angry, was all for my sake, Mascarille?

MASC. Yes, for your sake. But, since my kind services meet with such recompense; since I have thus to bear with your caprices; since for all reward I am haughtily called faithless rascal, cheat, and deceiver, I will soon correct the mistake I have been guilty of, and in a moment, scatter all my schemes to the wind.

HIP. (*stopping him*). Pray do not be so hard upon me, and forgive my first outburst of passion.

MASC. No, no, leave me alone; I will soon change the plan which offends you so much. You will have no more cause in future to complain of my schemes. You shall have my master, I promise you that you shall.

HIP. Nay, my good, honest Mascarille, do not be angry with me. I judged you harshly; I was wrong, I confess it (*pulls out her purse*); but I will try to atone for my fault with this. Can you be so hard-hearted as to leave me in this manner?

MASC. Do whatever I will, I fear I cannot. But really your hasty temper makes you very unjust. Nothing wounds more a noble mind, than imputations upon its honour.

HIP. Yes, it is true I treated you very badly, but let these two gold pieces heal your wounds.

MASC. Eh! I had no such meaning (*accepts the money*).

I am very sensitive on the point of honour, but my anger is giving way already. We must bear sometimes with our friends' failings.

HIP. Can you bring to pass what I so much long for, Mascarille? and do you really believe that your bold projects will favour my love, as you imagine?

MASC. Do not make yourself anxious about that; I am ready for all kinds of emergencies, and even though this stratagem should fail to bring about what we wish, another shall succeed.

HIP. Be sure, at least, that Hippolyte will never be ungrateful.

MASC. It is not the hope of gain that spurs me on.

HIP. There is your master beckoning; he wants to speak to you. Do not forget to do all you can for me. Good-bye.
(*Exit HIPPOLYTE.*)

SCENE XI.—LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

LÉL. What in the world are you doing here? You promised to do wonders, but your dilatory ways are really unparalleled! Had not my good genius forewarned me, all hopes of success would be over for me. Farewell then to joy and welfare! I should have become a prey to eternal grief. In short, had I not been there just at the right moment, Anselme would have carried off the captive, and she was for ever lost to me; but I parried the thrust, I warded off the blow, and prevailed so far upon Trufaldin's fears as to make him keep her in his house.

MASC. That's the third time! When we come to ten we will chalk it up. You incorrigible donkey! it was by my orders that Anselme undertook a bargain so favourable to our purpose. She was to be left entirely in my power, and your cursed meddling has again spoilt everything. And do you expect me, after this, to labour and toil to serve your love? I would rather a thousand times become a mule, pumpkin, codfish, owl, or vampire, and that Satan should come and twist your neck for you. (*Exit.*)

LÉL. I must take him to some tavern, and let him discharge his fury on the glasses.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

MASC. Well, I yield again to your entreaties, I yield in spite of all my protestations to the contrary; I can resist no longer, and I venture once more into unknown dangers to promote your interests, which I had sworn to give up. So tender-hearted is Mascarille! I ask you what would have happened had Dame Nature made a girl of him! Yet, believe me, don't presume too much on my promise, and give your usual countercheck to the project I have in hand; don't go and commit some blunder or other and destroy my hopes. I will excuse you to Anselme, in order to have what we want from him; but should your indiscretion burst forth again, then farewell to all care on my part for the object of your passion.

LÉL. No, no, I will be careful, I tell you. Never fear, you shall see

MASC. Mind you keep your word. I have planned for your sake a bold stratagem. Your father shows great unwillingness to gratify all your desires by dying, and I have just killed him,—in words, that is to say. I have spread the news that, seized by a fit of apoplexy, the good old man has suddenly departed this life. But to make the thing more safe, I have managed first to start him off for his farm. I sent somebody to tell him that the workmen, in digging the foundations of his new barn, had discovered a treasure. Off he flew in a moment; and everybody except us is gone to the country after him. I have killed him to-day in everybody's imagination, and am about to bury him in effigy. Now that I have told you all the plot, play your part carefully. As for mine, if you should see me fail in it, were it only in one single word, I give you leave to tell me plainly that I am a fool. *(Exit.)*

SCENE II.—LÉLIE.

I must acknowledge that he has found out a strange way of helping me; but when one is really in love

with a beautiful girl, what would not one do to be made happy? If love can be said to be a fair excuse, even for a crime, it can surely be one for this harmless piece of imposture, with which the strength of my passion forces me to-day to comply, in consideration of the great joy that is to follow. Good heavens! how quick they are! I see them talking together about it. Now to get ready to act my part. *(Exit.)*

SCENE III.—ANSELME, MASCARILLE.

MASC. The news may well surprise you.

ANS. To die in this manner!

MASC. He was certainly much to blame. I can never forgive him for such an affront.

ANS. Not even to find time to be ill!

MASC. No, never was a man in such a hurry to die.

ANS. And L  lie?

MASC. He has lost all command over himself, and is wild with sorrow. He has knocked himself about till he is black and blue, and has resolved to follow his father to the grave. In short, the excess of his grief determined me to wrap the dead in a shroud with the utmost speed, for fear that the sight which feeds his despair should tempt him at last to take some fatal step.

ANS. All the same, you should have put it off till the evening; for not only should I have been glad to have seen poor Pandolfe once more, but whoever buries a man too hastily may commit murder; many a man is thought to be dead who only looks like it.

MASC. I warrant him dead to all intents and purposes. But now, to return to what we were talking about. L  lie has resolved (and it will do him good) to give his father a splendid funeral, in order to comfort the deceased a little for his hard fate, by the pleasure he will have at seeing the honours we pay to him after his death. My master inherits a very good income; but he is only a novice in business: all he can see is that the greater part of his property does not lie within his reach, and that what he has, is in paper. He would beg of you, after having

asked you to forgive him for his violent conduct of late, to advance him at least enough to defray the expenses of this his last duty to

ANS. Yes, yes, you have told me this already, and I will go and see him.

MASC. (*alone*). So far so good; everything is going on as smoothly as possible. Let us endeavour to make the end correspond to so satisfactory a beginning. Lest we should be wrecked in the very harbour, let us steer the ship with all care, and keep a sharp look-out at the masthead.

SCENE IV.—ANSELME, LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

ANS. Come away; I cannot, without great sorrow, see him wrapt up after that sad fashion. Alas! to die in so short a time! He was alive and well only this morning!

MASC. We sometimes go over a good deal of ground in a little time.

LEL. (*weeping*). Oh!

ANS. Nay, dear Lélie, he was but a man after all; Rome itself can grant no dispensation from death.

LEL. Oh!

ANS. It cuts down human beings without the least warning, and shows no pity in its designs against them.

LEL. Oh!

ANS. That merciless destroyer will not forego one bite of his murderous teeth, no, not even for the prayers of all mankind; every one must feel them.

LEL. Oh!

MASC. All your preaching is in vain; his sorrow is too deeply rooted to be eradicated.

ANS. If in spite of all these arguments your sorrow still endures, at least, my dear Lélie, try to moderate its violence.

LEL. Oh!

MASC. It is of no use; I know what he feels.

ANS. However, in answer to the hint of your servant, I bring you here money enough to celebrate the funeral obsequies of your father.

LEL. Oh! oh!

MASC. How his grief increases at this word! It is death to him, to think of his misfortune.

ANS. You will find by the good man's books that I owe him a much larger sum of money; but even if this were not the case, and if I were in no way your debtor, you could still freely command my purse. Take this; I am entirely at your service, and will prove it.

LEL. (*going*). Oh!

MASC. How great is the grief my master feels!

ANS. Mascarille, I think it would be but right if he would give me a couple of words as a receipt.

MASC. Oh!

ANS. Everything is so very uncertain in this world.

MASC. Oh!

ANS. Get him to write the acknowledgment I want.

MASC. Alas! how can he comply with your wish while he is in such a state of mind? Give him time to forget his sorrow, and as soon as his great grief leaves him any rest, I will at once get you the security. Farewell. I feel my heart ready to burst with grief; I must go with him and give full vent to my tears. Oh!

ANS. This world is full of troubles! At every turn man meets with them under some shape or other, and never here below . . .

SCENE V.—PANDOLFE, ANSELME.

ANS. Oh heavens, how I tremble! What! Pandolfe come back from the dead! O God! has not his soul found rest? How wan his face has grown since his death! For pity's sake, do not approach me! my repugnance at touching a dead man is too great.

PAND. What can be the cause of this ridiculous terror?

ANS. Tell me, at a distance, what reason brings you here. If you have taken all this trouble to bid me farewell, it is too much courtesy. Believe me, I could well have dispensed with the compliment. If your soul is in torment and needs prayers, you shall have them, I promise you, but do not frighten me! Upon the word of a terrified man, I will go immediately and order so many prayers that you will be satisfied.

Vanish then, vanish, I pray,
And may kindest Heaven bestow
Gladness bright, and health alway,
To your Lordship in death laid low.*

PAND. In spite of all my vexation, I cannot help laughing.

ANS. Wondrous strange! How merry you are for a dead man!

PAND. Is this a joke, or are you stark mad? Why do you treat a living man as if he were dead?

ANS. Alas! you are dead indeed, and I myself saw you just now.

PAND. What! I am dead without knowing anything about it?

ANS. As soon as Mascarille told me the news, I felt myself ready to die of grief.

PAND. Are you asleep or awake? Do you really not know me?

ANS. You are clothed with a ghostly body which much resembles your own, but which may change in a moment! I dread to see you swell up to the size of a giant, and put on a hideous face! For pity's sake do not assume some frightful shape; I am sufficiently terrified already.

PAND. At another time your credulity and simplicity would have amused me, Anselme, and I should have tried to carry on the joke a little longer; but this story of my death, and another forged one about a supposed treasure, which it was proved to me has no existence, raise in my mind a strong suspicion that Mascarille is a villain, a most villainous villain, a villain proof against fear and remorse, and capable of employing any means to secure his own ends.

ANS. What! can I have been imposed upon? Can I have been made a fool of? A rare compliment to my common sense! Let us touch him, just a little to see: it is he himself! Plague take me for an old idiot!—For pity's sake do not spread this story abroad, they would write a farce about my stupidity, and I should never hear the end of it. But now, Pandolfe, help me to get back the money I lent to bury you.

* Seems to be a formula by which Anselme attempts to lay the supposed ghost. He repeats it on his knees.

PAND. Money, do you say? Oh! now I see the key to the whole affair. So much the worse for you! I shall not trouble myself with that part of the business, but shall go straightway and give information against this Mascarille; and if they can catch him, he shall be hanged, cost what it may.

ANS. (*alone*). And I, foolish gull, I must needs believe everything a scoundrel comes and tells me, and must lose in one day both my common sense and my money. Upon my word, my grey hairs become me well! So ready at once to fall into the snare set for me, and to believe upon trust the first story concocted to take me in! Out upon me for an old fool! But I see

SCENE VI.—LÉLIE, ANSELME.

LEL. (*aside*). Now, with this passport, I am pretty sure of access to Trufaldin.

ANS. I am glad to see that your grief is leaving you.

LEL. What do you say? No, it will never leave a heart bent on cherishing it.

ANS. I came back to confess to you frankly that I made a mistake this afternoon, when I gave you that purse. I had by inadvertence put among those gold pieces which look so good, several which, I fear, are bad; I bring therefore with me enough money to change them. Forgery is now carried on so boldly in this country, that no one can receive anything without suspicion. What a comfort it would be to every honest man, if these coiners of base money could one and all be hanged!

LEL. I am greatly obliged to you for changing them; but I must acknowledge that I did not notice any of the pieces to be bad.

ANS. I should know them directly; just show them to me. Is this all?

LEL. Yes.

ANS. Thanks! And so, my dear money, I have caught you again! Go once more back into my pocket. As for you, my worthy swindler, you will have none of it! Ha! you treat as dead, people that are in good health, do you?

And what would you have done with me, a poor old man of a father-in-law? Upon my word, I had made a nice choice, and should have added to my family, in you, sir, an estimable son-in-law! Go, sir; go and hang yourself for very shame and regret! (*Exit.*)

LEL. Well, I must acknowledge that I am caught in my own trap! But what an extraordinary thing! How could he have found us out so soon?

SCENE VII.—LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

MASC. So you had gone out? I have been hunting for you everywhere. Well, have we succeeded at last? I will give the cleverest of rogues six trials to do as much. Here, give me the money that I may go directly and buy our slave. Won't your rival be sold!

LEL. Ah! my dear fellow, our luck has sadly changed: you could never guess what my hard fate had in store for me!

MASC. Well, what's the matter now?

LEL. Anselme having found out the trick we played him, got out of me all the money he had lent us, under pretence that some of the pieces were bad, and that he wanted to change them.

MASC. You are joking, surely?

LEL. It is but too true.

MASC. In good earnest?

LEL. In good earnest. I am half wild over it; and I know that you will be terribly angry with me.

MASC. I, sir! Who would be such a fool? Anger is unwholesome, and I mean to take care of myself, happen what may. Let Célie be free, or remain a captive; let Léandre buy her, or leave her where she is: what is that to me? I don't care a brass button about it.

LEL. Nay, do not show such indifference to me, but be more indulgent for this little piece of thoughtlessness. But for that, you must acknowledge that I did wonders, and that in the affair of the sham death, I showed to everyone such a well-feigned grief, that the most sharp-sighted would have been taken in.

MASC. Much reason you have to praise yourself!

LEL. I know I am to blame, and I acknowledge it. But if you ever cared for my happiness, find a remedy for this mishap, and continue to help me.

MASC. I am your very humble servant; I have no leisure.

LEL. Mascarille, my dear dear fellow!

MASC. I won't listen to you.

LEL. Do me this favour.

MASC. No; I'll do nothing of the kind.

LEL. If nothing can move you, I shall kill myself.

MASC. Do so, you are quite at liberty.

LEL. Can I not soften you?

MASC. No.

LEL. Do you see my sword ready drawn?

MASC. Yes.

LEL. I will plunge it through my breast.

MASC. Do just as you please.

LEL. Will it not grieve you to take away my life?

MASC. Not in the least.

LEL. Farewell, Mascarille.

MASC. Farewell, Mr. Lélie.

LEL. What ?

MASC. Be quick then and kill yourself; you take a long time about it.

LEL. I believe that, in order to have my clothes, you would willingly see me play the fool and end my life!

MASC. As if I did not know all along that it was but mere pretence! Although there may be many who swear to do it, how very few are there ready, nowadays, to kill themselves in good earnest.

SCENE VIII.—TRUFALDIN, LÉANDRE, LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

(TRUFALDIN is seen whispering to LÉANDRE.)

LEL. What's that I see? My rival and Trufaldin together! He is going to buy Célie. I tremble for fear!

MASC. There is no doubt that he will do all he can; and if he has money, he can do all he will. For my part, I am delighted. This is the fruit of your blundering mistakes and of your impatience.

LEL. What must I do? Pray advise me.

MASC. I don't know.

LEL. I know; I will go and pick a quarrel with him.

MASC. What good will come of that?

LEL. What would you have me do, to prevent him from succeeding?

MASC. There, I forgive you. Once more I'll cast an eye of pity on you. Leave me to watch him. I believe I can discover what projects he has in view, without your quarrelling with him. *(Exit LÉLIE.)*

TRUF. *(to LÉANDRE)*. When your messenger comes by and by, it shall be done. *(Exit TRUFALDIN.)*

MASC. *(aside and going out)*. I must become his confidant in order more easily to baffle his designs. Thus only can I overreach him. *(Exit.)*

LEAN. *(alone)*. Thanks to heaven, my happiness is now beyond the reach of chance! I have found the way to secure it, and have no more to fear. Whatever my rival may now undertake, it is no longer in his power to injure me.

SCENE IX.—LÉANDRE, and MASCARILLE afterwards.

MASC. *(within)*. Oh! oh! help! Murder! help! I shall be killed outright! Oh! oh! oh! oh! oh! Oh you brute! you cruel wretch!

LEAN. *(alone)*. Where does all that noise come from? *(to MASCARILLE entering)*. What is it? What are they doing to you?

MASC. He has just given me two hundred blows with a stick.

LEAN. Who has?

MASC. Lélie.

LEAN. But why?

MASC. He has turned me out for nothing, and has beaten me within an inch of my life!

LEAN. He certainly is much to blame.

MASC. Yes, and I swear I will be revenged on him; only let me get the chance!—Yes, I will teach you, you confounded thrasher of other people, that my bones are not to be broken with impunity. I am a servant, it is

true, but I am also a man of honour. After having served you faithfully for four years, you might have rewarded me otherwise than with a cudgel. To wound my honour in so sensitive a part as my shoulders! I'll be revenged on you, I repeat once more; I'll be revenged on you. A certain slave pleases you, does she? and you would fain have me get her for you, would you? Devil take me, if I don't so arrange matters that another shall have her!

LEAN. Listen to me, Mascarille, and moderate your passion. I always liked you, and often wished that a faithful and clever young fellow like you should take a fancy to enter my service. If you think my offer will suit you, and you have a mind to serve me, I will engage you at once.

MASC. I accept, sir: so much the more willingly, that propitious fate gives me thus, while serving you, the opportunity of avenging myself; and that while endeavouring to please you, I can best punish the brutal master I have left. In a word, by my dexterity, I hope that you and Célie

LEAN. My love for her has settled this point. I have just bought the matchless beauty for much less than her right value.

MASC. Ah! Célie belongs to you, then?

LEAN. You should see her at once, if I only had power over my own actions: but over them my father is master; and as I have just received a letter from him, informing me that he has decided upon my marrying Hippolyte, I would not have this come to his ears for fear of irritating him. I have therefore transacted this business with Trufaldin (whom I have just left) under a supposed name; and the bargain being completed, he is to give Célie to the person who brings him my ring. First of all, however, I must try and discover some means of hiding from all eyes the beauty now my own. I want to find quickly a place of retirement where this adorable captive may live in secrecy.

MASC. I have, somewhere in the neighbourhood of the town, an old relative whose house, I feel sure, I can offer to you. There you could safely place her, and nobody would ever know anything about it.

LEAN. You render me a much needed service. Here,

take this ring and go and fetch the fair one for me; as soon as Trufaldin sees the token, he will deliver her into your hands. You will then take her to the house you speak of, when . . . Hush! here comes Hippolyte.

SCENE X.—HIPPOLYTE, LÉANDRE, MASCARILLE.

HIP. I have some news for you, Léandre, but will you think it bad or good?

LEAN. Before I can judge and answer you, I must know what the news is.

HIP. Give me your arm as far as the church, and I will tell you.

LEAN. (*to MASCARILLE*). Go, make haste and render me that service without loss of time.

SCENE XI.—MASCARILLE (*alone*).

Yes, I will serve you a dish of my own dressing. Was there ever in the world a more lucky fellow? How delighted Lélie will be as soon as he hears of this! Fancy his lady-love falling into our hands in such a fashion! To receive blessings whence evil should flow, and be made happy by a rival's hand! After this noble exploit, I command that due preparations should be made to paint me as a hero crowned with laurel, and that at the foot of the portrait be inscribed in letters of gold, VIVAT MASCARILLUS KNAVUM IMPERATOR!

SCENE XII.—TRUFALDIN, MASCARILLE.

MASC. Ho, within there!

TRUF. What do you want?

MASC. This ring, which you know, will tell you what business brings me here.

TRUF. Yes, it's a ring I know well. Wait a moment, I will go and fetch the slave.

SCENE XIII.—TRUFALDIN, A MESSENGER, MASCARILLE.

MESS. (*to TRUFALDIN*). Do me the honour, sir, to tell me where a gentleman lives who . . .

TRUF. What gentleman?

MESS. I think his name is Trufaldin.

TRUF. What do you want with him? My name is Trufaldin.

MESS. Only to deliver this letter to him.

TRUFALDIN *reads*.

"The kind Providence that watches over me has just brought to my ears the most welcome report that my daughter, who was stolen from me when about four years of age, is now a slave in your house, under the name of Célie. If you ever knew what it is to be a father, and are sensible to the tenderness of natural affection, keep that dear child for me as if she were your own. I am setting out myself to fetch her, and you shall be so well rewarded for your care that you will bless the day when you were the occasion of my happiness."

"DON PEDRO DE GUSMAN,

"Madrid.

"Marquis de Montalcana."

TRUF. (*aside*). Although no great faith can be put in gipsies, yet those who sold her to me told me that somebody would soon come and fetch her, and that I should have no reason to complain of the bargain; yet through my impatience I was just about to lose all that I had hoped for. (*to the MESSENGER*) Had you come one moment later, your journey would have been in vain. I was just going to give the girl into this gentleman's hands; but it is all right and I will take every care of her. (*to MASCARILLE*) You heard what I have just read. You must tell him who sent you that I cannot possibly keep my word, and that he had better come and receive his money back.

MASC. But in doing so you insult him and . . .

TRUF. It is of no use talking about it. (*Exit.*)

MASC. (*alone*). Well, this is an unfortunate letter for us! Fortune has indeed crushed all my hopes! What an unlucky moment this messenger has chosen to come all the way from Spain! May thunder and lightning follow him! Surely never had such a good beginning a more disastrous end.

SCENE XIV.—LÉLIE (*laughing*), MASCARILLE.

MASC. Why this exuberant joy?

LÉL. Let me have my laugh out before I tell you.

MASC. By all means let us laugh; we have cause to be merry.

LÉL. Ah! I shall never again be the object of your complaints; you will twit me no more with spoiling all your plans by my blunders. I myself have played one of the most clever tricks that ever was heard of. It is true I am hasty, and sometimes a little too quick-tempered; but yet, when I like, my imagination is as good as that of any man living; you yourself will confess that what I have done proceeds from an amount of cleverness rarely equalled.

MASC. Let us hear what your wondrous imagination has done.

LÉL. Just now, being struck with a genuine fear at seeing Trufaldin with my rival, I cast about to find out some remedy; at last, collecting all my powers, I conceived, digested, and carried out a stratagem before which all yours, of which you are so proud, must lower their colours.

MASC. But what can it possibly be?

LÉL. Don't lose patience, only hear.—I wrote without delay a letter to Trufaldin, which I so arranged that it seemed to come from a great nobleman. In it was stated that through a most fortunate occurrence he had just learnt that his daughter, who had once been kidnapped by gipsies, had been bought by Trufaldin, and was living in his house: that therefore he was just starting from Spain to come and fetch her, and begged him in the meantime to keep her and take great care of her, for he meant to reward him so handsomely that he never would have to complain of having been the instrument of his future happiness.

MASC. Excellent.

LÉL. But you must really listen to the best part of the joke. The letter was sent and delivered to him;—when do you think? Well, in the very nick of time. Fancy! my messenger told me that he found a fellow there who was on the point of taking her away, and that he never

saw anybody look so foolish as he did when my letter came and prevented him.

MASC. And did you do all this without giving yourself to the devil?

LEL. Yes; you'd never have believed me capable of such a subtle piece of wit? At least praise my skill and the dexterity with which I have utterly disconcerted the well-laid scheme of my rival.

MASC. I lack eloquence to praise you as you deserve. I feel unequal to the task. Yes, my tongue wants power sufficiently to laud this sublime act, this delicate stratagem, achieved before my own eyes; this great and glorious work of an imagination that for power yields to no other. I would I had the talent of the most accomplished scholar to express in noble verse or in learned prose that you will always be, in spite of all that can be said and done, what you always were; that is, a man whose reason is dis-tempered, whose common sense is non-existent, whose judgment is distorted; that you are a marplot, an ass, a hare-brained blundering fellow; what can I think of? a . . . a hundred things worse ought I to have said. This is only an abridgment of the panegyric you deserve.

LEL. Pray tell me what puts you in such a passion with me? Have I done anything wrong?

MASC. Oh dear, no, nothing at all; but please don't follow me.

LEL. I will follow you everywhere to clear up this mystery.

MASC. Will you? Come then, strengthen your legs, for I will give you an opportunity of exercising them.

(Exit.)

LEL. He has escaped me! Oh unutterable misfortune! What am I to understand from what he has said? And what harm can I possibly have done to myself?

ACT III.

SCENE I.—MASCARILLE (*alone*).

Silence, my good nature; you are a simpleton, and I am determined to listen to your pleadings no more. You, my anger, you are right; it is unbearable to be everlastingly patching up the blunders of a blockhead. My patience is at an end; after all the glorious schemes he has ruined, I shall give up all further attempts.—And yet let us consider the matter calmly. If I listen to my legitimate indignation, what will people say? That I yield to difficulties, that I feel myself overmatched. And then, what will become of my public character as the king of cheats? Shall I not thus lose the result of so many successful campaigns? Honour, Mascarille, is a grand thing! Beware of stopping short in thy noble career; and whatever thy master may have done to provoke thy wrath, complete the work, not to oblige him, but for thy own glory! But whatever thou dost will be lost, troubled as thou art by thy evil genius, which forces thee to alter thy course at every turn. It is beating the empty air to pretend to stop that resistless hurricane, let loose to overturn in a moment the most beautiful edifices thy art has raised! —Well, well, whatever may happen, once more, and out of sheer kindness, let us lend him our help; and if he still persists in baffling our designs, let him for ever be deprived of our assistance. After all, the affair does not stand so very badly if Léandre will weary of the pursuit, and leave me but one single day for what I contemplate. Yes, I have a most ingenious plot in my head, which I feel confident would result in a most splendid success, if I can but remove that obstacle. Good; let us see if he still persists in his love.

SCENE II.—LÉANDRE, MASCARILLE.

MASC. Sir, I have lost my time. Trufaldin will not keep his word.

LEAN. He told me all about it himself; but, what is more, I have discovered that all this fine story of Célie

being kidnapped by gipsies, of her having a great nobleman for her father, who is leaving Spain to come and fetch her, is nothing but a pure invention, a mere farce, a made-up story by which L  lie tried to put off our purchase of C  lie.

MASC. Did you ever see such villany?

LEAN. And yet this ridiculous story has taken such hold on Trufaldin, and he has swallowed the bait of this shallow device so greedily, that he will not hear of being undeceived.

MASC. So that for the future he will keep careful guard over her; there is nothing to be done, as far as I can see.

LEAN. Mascarille, if at first I thought her amiable, I now think her perfectly enchanting; so much so that, to tell you the truth, I am debating with myself whether I had not better run to extremes to gain possession of her, and change her sad life by the offer of my hand, and her present bonds for those of matrimony.

MASC. Would you marry her?

LEAN. I scarcely know; but if all is not clear in her previous life, her beauty and virtue are gentle attractions, whose wonderful power no heart can withstand.

MASC. Her virtue, do you say?

LEAN. How? What's that you are muttering? What makes you hesitate at the word *virtue*? Explain yourself.

MASC. No, sir: your countenance has changed in a moment; it would be better perhaps for me to be silent.

LEAN. No, no; speak out.

MASC. Well, then, out of charity, I will cure you of your blindness—That girl

LEAN. Proceed.

MASC. Is very far from being hard-hearted, when no one is by; and her heart, believe me, is not made of flint for those who know how to begin at the right end. She looks demure enough, and would fain pass for a prude, but I can speak of her with certainty. You know it is somewhat in my line to be a connoisseur in this kind of game.

LEAN. C  lie

MASC. Yes, her modesty is downright sham, nothing

but the semblance of virtue; it will sustain no assault, but vanishes in a moment before the rays of a gold piece.

LEAN. Heavens! what is that you tell me? Can I believe

MASC. Sir, you may do as you please; what does it matter to me? Do not believe me, if you do not care to do so. Pray follow your own inclinations, and give her your hand: the whole city in a body will acknowledge your zeal, and in marrying her you will receive credit for taking the common town property under your protection.

LEAN. This is strange and startling news!

MASC. (*aside*). He has swallowed the bait; let us hold on: if we can but hook him in good earnest, we shall have landed an ugly customer.

LEAN. What terrible grief all this causes me!

MASC. What! could you

LEAN. Go to the post-office, and see if there is a letter for me. (*alone, and for a time lost in thought*) Who would not have been imposed upon? If what he says is true, never was there a more deceiving countenance.

SCENE III.—LÉANDRE, LÉLIE.

LÉL. What can make you look so sad?

LEAN. I, sad?

LÉL. Yes, you.

LEAN. I have no cause for sadness.

LÉL. I am afraid that Célie is no stranger to it.

LEAN. My mind does not descend to such trifles.

LÉL. Yet you had great designs upon her once. Of course you may speak thus, considering the poor success that resulted from them.

LEAN. If I were such a fool as to care for her, I should soon despise all your devices.

LÉL. What devices?

LEAN. My dear sir, we know all about it.

LÉL. Know all about what?

LEAN. All about your proceedings from beginning to end.

LÉL. This is Hebrew to me; I do not understand what you can possibly mean.

LEAN. You may pretend not to understand me, as much as you please, but, believe me, you need not fear; I should be sorry to dispute such a property with you. I sincerely admire beauty that is unsullied, but not that of an unfortunate.

LEL. Gently, gently, Léandre.

LEAN. How kind-hearted you are! I tell you you may wait upon her without fear, and then boast of your successful intrigues. It is true that her beauty is very uncommon, but to balance that, the rest is common enough.

LEL. Léandre, cease your insulting language. You may employ what means you like to prevent me from gaining her, but spare me these murderous attacks upon her reputation. Let me tell you that I think it cowardly in me so long to listen to your slanders of the girl I love, and that I could endure your love of her with less repugnance than aught that touches her honour.

LEAN. What I say, I say on good authority.

LEL. Whoever told you so is a scoundrel and a villain. Her character is blameless; I know her heart.

LEAN. Still, I should think that Mascarille is a competent judge; it is he who condemns her.

LEL. Mascarille!

LEAN. Mascarille.

LEL. He presumes to slander an honourable girl, and thinks perhaps that I shall treat the matter as a joke! I'll lay any wager he retracts.

LEAN. I'll wager he does not.

LEL. S'death! I'd break every bone he has in his body, if he dared to maintain such lies before me.

LEAN. I'll crop his ears for him if he does not stick to everything he told me. *(Enter MASCARILLE.)*

SCENE IV.—LÉLIE, LÉANDRE, MASCARILLE.

LEL. There, there he is. Come here, thou cursed hound!

MASC. What's the matter?

LEL. Thou tongue of the foul fiend, fruitful in lies! darest thou to fasten thy vile slander upon Célie, and rob

her of the purest virtue which ever shone in the midst of misfortune?

MASC. (*in a whisper to LÉLIE*). Be careful; this is a story of my own invention.

LEL. No, no, none of your winking! None of your joking! I am blind and deaf to all you do or say. Were you my own brother, I would make you pay dearly for it. To slander her I adore is to wound me in my inmost soul. I tell you, no; all these signs are in vain. What is it you said to him?

MASC. Come now, do not quarrel with me, or I leave you.

LEL. You'll not stir a step.

MASC. Oh! that's something new.

LEL. Speak then; confess!

MASC. (*in a whisper to LÉLIE*). Do leave me alone; I tell you I did it on purpose.

LEL. Make haste; tell me what you said; I must and will have it out!

MASC. (*in a whisper to LÉLIE*). I said what I said; do not get into a passion.

LEL. (*drawing his sword*). I'll make you change your tune!

LEAN. (*stopping him*). This is going too far; moderate your anger.

MASC. (*aside*). Was there ever in the world such a thick-headed idiot?

LEL. Let me wreak my just wrath upon him.

LEAN. You take too much upon you in wishing to chastise him in my presence.

LEL. What! Have I now no right to chastise my own servant?

LEAN. How, your servant?

MASC. (*aside*). There! he'll find it all out.

LEL. If I wished to beat him to death, what is that to you? Is he not my servant?

LEAN. He is mine now.

LEL. This is a fine joke. I should like to know how he comes to be yours? No doubt

MASC. (*whispering to LÉLIE*). Mind

LEL. What have you to say?

MASC. (*aside*). The insufferable blockhead! he'll spoil everything; he won't understand even the clearest signs.

LEL. You have strange ideas, Léandre, and tell me a likely story. He is not my servant!

LEAN. Did you not send him away for some slight offence he had committed?

LEL. What offence?

LEAN. And violently beat him into the bargain?

LEL. Not a bit of it. I drive him away! I beat him violently! Either you are making fun of me, Léandre, or he of you.

MASC. (*aside*). Go on, go on, you lout; you'll settle your own affairs presently.

LEAN. (*to MASCARILLE*). Then the beating is only imaginary?

MASC. He does not know what he says; his memory . . .

LEAN. No, no, all these signs betoken no good. I suspect you've been playing some of your neat tricks! Well, go; the cleverness of the invention shall cover your retreat. I am only too thankful to be undeceived, and to understand what motives made you speak of her as you did. I am only too thankful that, having trusted myself to your hypocritical zeal, I come off so cheaply! *Verbum sap. &c.* Farewell, Lélie! your most obedient servant. (*Exit.*)

SCENE V.—LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

MASC. Take heart, my boy, may success ever attend us! Let us draw our sword and bravely take the field; let us act *Olibrius*,* *the murderer of the innocents*.

LEL. He accused you of slandering . . .

MASC. And you could not let the artifice pass and leave him undeceived, when it served your purpose by almost curing him of his love.—No! the gentleman has a noble soul: he is not at all one to put up with dissimulation! When by dint of skill and planning I become at last his rival's confidant, and his mistress is sure to fall into my hands, he must needs invent a false story and make me

* A Roman governor, noted for his cruelty. His name appears in many of the old mysteries.

lose the chance! When I went to throw cold water upon his rival's ardour, the honest fellow comes forward in haste to fan the flame. In vain do I make signs; in vain do I tell him that it is a contrivance of mine; he will listen to nothing, and he is not satisfied before he has disclosed every item of the plot. Grand and sublime product of an "imagination which is as good as that of any man living!" A rarity, upon my word, and one worthy to adorn a king's private museum!

LEL. How can I possibly avoid running counter to your plans, when you do not even tell me what you mean to attempt? I shall very likely do it again.

MASC. So much the worse for you.

LEL. Your anger would be more justifiable if you gave me a little insight into your schemes; but when I am kept in utter ignorance, how can I help being caught napping?

MASC. I believe you would make a capital fencing-master, you are so skilful in breaking the attack and getting out of distance.

LEL. Since the thing is done, don't let us think any more about it. In any case my rival cannot thwart me, and provided your endeavours, in which I still trust . . .

MASC. This is all very well; but let us speak of something else. I am far too angry to be appeased in a moment, and you will have first to render me a service. After that, we will see if I ought again to take upon myself the management of your love-affairs.

LEL. If this is all you want, you may rely on me. Have you need of my sword, of my blood?

MASC. What strange ideas he takes into his head! You are just like those who are always more ready to draw out their swords than their purse, were it only a groat they had to give.

LEL. What, then, can I do for you?

MASC. You must make peace with your father.

LEL. But it is made already.

MASC. Yes, it is all very well as far as you are concerned, but what about me? This morning, in order to serve you, I made him pass for dead. The very idea of it is unbearable to him. To men of his age such jokes as

these which force them to contemplate the end they are nearing, are terrible. The good man, notwithstanding his age, loves life dearly, and hates any jesting upon the subject. He fears the omen, and is so angry with me that I hear he has lodged a complaint against me. Now I am greatly afraid that, if once I am housed at the king's expense, I may find myself so comfortable there from the very first, that I shall find it difficult to leave. Many warrants have been issued of late against me, for in this villanous age, virtue is always an object of envy and persecution. Go, therefore, and try to prevail on your father to forgive me.

LÉL. Yes, we will make him relent; but on your side you promise me

MASC. Yes, yes, we will see. (*Exit LÉLIE.*) Let's take breath after so many labours. I will, for a time, give up all intrigues, and cease to plague my own life out as if I were possessed with a devil. Léandre can do nothing against us, for Célie is carefully watched over since that letter, and

SCENE VI.—ERGASTE, MASCARILLE.

ERG. I was looking for you everywhere to render you a service, and give you an important piece of advice.

MASC. What is it?

ERG. There's nobody to overhear us?

MASC. No.

ERG. I believe I may say that we are as good friends as two men can be in this world. I am aware of the business you have in hand concerning that love affair of your master's. Be on your guard then, for Léandre is up and doing. He has heard that at this time of the year it is customary for some ladies of the neighbourhood to visit Trufaldin in the evening in masks, and he intends to make use of this, and to carry off Célie this very night.

MASC. Humph! That's enough. But let him see to it, or I'll snatch the prey from under his very nose; don't let him shout before he's at the top of the tree. I know a dodge worth two of that, and I'll catch him in his own trap.

He does not yet know all the gifts of Mascarille. Good bye; we'll have a glass together at the first opportunity.
(*Exit ERGASTE.*)

SCENE VII.—MASCARILLE.

All the benefit contained in this lover's scheme shall be for us! But our plan must be carefully laid, and then we may risk the venture without danger. If I put on a mask and am the first there, Léandre will not dare to challenge me; and if by being first in the field we carry off the prize, he'll be at the expense of the undertaking for us. For since his scheme is already known, and suspicion is sure to fall on him, we, safe from all pursuit, need not fear the consequences of this hazardous enterprise. This may be called doing the thing neatly and quietly, and using the cat's paw to take the chestnuts out of the fire. Quick, let me go without delay and disguise myself with some jovial fellows of my own cloth. I know where the game lies, and can easily provide men and appliances in a moment. Depend upon it, I'll make good use of my natural skill. If I have been endowed with the gift of knavery, I am not one of those degenerate souls who hide under a bushel the talents they have received from Heaven.
(*Exit.*)

SCENE VIII.—LÉLIE, ERGASTE.

LEL. So he intends to carry her off with the help of the masquerade.

ERG. Nothing can be more certain. One of his party having informed me of his plan, I ran instantly to tell it all to Mascarille, who said he would go at once and put a stop to the scheme by an artifice which he concocted on the spur of the moment. Meeting you thus accidentally, I thought I had better let you know what was going on.

LEL. I am greatly obliged; you may depend upon my not forgetting you.
(*Exit ERGASTE.*)

SCENE IX.—LÉLIE.

That knave of mine is sure to play them some trick or

other; and I will on my part back him up. It shall never be said that in a matter which so nearly concerns me I didn't stir a peg. Now's the time; they'll be surprised to see me. Egad! why did I not bring my peace-maker* with me? But come and attack me who will, I have two good pistols and my trusty sword. Ho! ho there! within! A word with you.

SCENE X.—TRUFALDIN (*at his window*), LÉLIE.

TRUF. What is the matter? Anybody coming to see me?

LÉL. Mind you shut your door carefully to-night.

TRUF. Why?

LÉL. Some people are coming in masks to give you an unpleasant kind of serenade; they wish to carry off Célie.

TRUF. Good heavens!

LÉL. They will no doubt soon be here. Keep where you are, you can see them from your window.—Well, did I not tell you so? Don't you see them coming? Hush! I will read them a lecture before your face; we shall have fine fun if the string does not snap.

SCENE XI.—LÉLIE, TRUFALDIN; MASCARILLE, and his Company, *masked*.

TRUF. Oh, the simpletons! to think of taking me by surprise!

LÉL. I say, you masqueraders, kindly tell me where you are off to so fast? Trufaldin, pray open the door to these mummers, and see them dance.† (*to MASCARILLE, disguised as*

* No special arm seems intended by *porte-respect*. Littré says "*arme, surtout canne ou bâton, qu'on porte pour se défendre, et qui impose.*" Génin is doubtful as to the meaning, but also suggests "*bâton.*" Despois quotes Furetière: "*Porte-respect est un nom que quelques-uns donnent à un mousqueton ou une carabine qui a un calibre fort large, &c.*" Judging by the context, this is perhaps the meaning.

† *Trufaldin, ouvrez-leur pour jouer un momon.* "*Momon, kind of dance executed by masqueraders.*"—Littré.

This seems to be the meaning here, but *momon* also means "*challenge with dice made by masqueraders.*" See Littré and Despois, and compare '*Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*,' Act v. Sc. i.

a woman). How pretty she is! what a dear darling she looks! How now, you are grumbling? With your leave, my beauty, I will remove your mask and see that face of yours?

TRUF. Get out, you villains! Be off, you cads!—Good night to you, sir; and many thanks.

SCENE XII.—LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

LEL. (*after having removed MASCARILLE's mask*). What! is it you, Mascarille?

MASC. Not a bit of it! it's somebody else.

LEL. Alas! who would have thought it! How hard fortune is upon us! Could I possibly have guessed what was going on, since you gave me no notice of the private reasons you had for disguising yourself? Unfortunate man that I am, unwittingly to play you such a trick! I am so angry that I have a great mind to give myself a sound beating.

MASC. Farewell, shining light! farewell, unparalleled imagination!

LEL. Alas! If your anger deprives me of your help, what guardian angel shall I invoke?

MASC. Invoke the devil!

LEL. Ah! if your heart is not made of stone, once more at least forgive my rashness! If I must kiss your feet to gain this boon, behold me . . .

MASC. Pooh! pooh! Come along, boys, come along; I hear some other people close at our heels! (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE XIII.—LÉANDRE and his Company, *masked*;
TRUFALDIN (*at his window*).

LEAN. Softly here; let us do nothing but what seems proper.

TRUF. What! are masks to besiege my door all night? Gentlemen, pray do not catch cold uselessly,—and you will have plenty of time for it; it is a little too late for you to ask Célie to accompany you, and she hopes you will excuse her for to-night. The dear girl is in bed, and cannot speak

to you. I am heartily sorry for it; but to refresh you for all the trouble you have taken for her sake, she sends you this box of perfume.

LEAN. Faugh! Perfume indeed! I am in an awful mess! We are found out; let us be off this way.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—LÉLIE (*disguised as an Armenian*), MASCARILLE.

MASC. You cut a very pretty figure dressed out in this fashion!

LEL. You have revived all my hopes with this new scheme.

MASC. It is always so with my anger; I never can keep it up. In vain do I swear and storm; I might just as well say nothing at all.

LEL. Be sure, that if ever it lies in my power, you will never have cause to complain of my ingratitude. Had I only one crust left, I would . . .

MASC. We will see by-and-by: but for the present bring all your mind to what you have to do. This time at least, if you commit any blunder, you will not have for excuse that you were taken unawares. I should think you know your part pretty well by heart for once.

LEL. But how did Trufaldin receive you?

MASC. I threw dust in the good man's eyes. With a pretended concern for his interests, I told him, with a great show of earnestness, that unless he was very cautious, he would certainly fall into some snare, for from different quarters danger was threatening him in the person of the slave, about whose birth he had already received such a made-up letter. Certain people, I told him, had tried to drag me into the business, but I had slipped my neck out of the noose and had positively refused. Seeing him so encompassed with perils, I could not help coming to forewarn him to stand on his guard. Starting with this text, I went on moralizing: I discoursed solemnly about the deceit and the frauds we daily meet with here below. I told him

that, as far as I was concerned, I hated the world and its evil ways; that I meant to work out my soul's salvation; to retire from all bustle and noise, and to live a quiet life with some honest man. I went on to say that, if he had no objection, there was no wish nearer my heart than that of spending the rest of my days in his family; that to prove how he had won my affection, so far from asking him to pay me for my services, I would trust in his hands, knowing that it would be safe there, some property I had from my father, and also all my savings; for I was determined to make him my sole heir in case Heaven should call me hence. This was the true way to win his heart! My intention was to try and manage a secret interview between you and your beloved, so that you might come to some understanding together. He himself gave me a capital opportunity of managing that you shall live openly under the same roof with her. Whilst talking to me about a son he had lost, and whom in a dream last night he saw come to life again, he told me the following story, upon which I have just founded our new stratagem.

LEL. Enough, I know it all; you have told it me twice already.

MASC. Yes, yes; but even if I should tell it three times, I should not wonder if, with all your belief in yourself, you broke down in some detail or other.

LEL. But I find it very hard to wait so long.

MASC. Don't let us run too fast, for fear of stumbling. You have a headpiece, do you see, which is none of the thinnest, and you must study your part well.—Trufaldin left Naples some time since; his name was then Zanobio Ruberti. He was suspected of having had a part in an insurrection which had taken place in the city (he really is not a man to disturb any State), and had in consequence to leave his native town stealthily by night. He left behind him a very young daughter and his wife, but he soon afterwards heard that they were both dead. In his great affliction he wished to take his property to some other place, and to settle there with the only child he had left, a young son called Horace. He wrote therefore to Bologna, where he had sent him when quite young, with his tutor called Alberto, so that he might receive a better

education than he could in his own town. But, although he waited for them two whole years, they never made their appearance. Believing them to be dead, he then came to this place, where he is living under the name you know. Twelve years have elapsed since then, but he has never discovered any trace of them.—This, then, is the substance of the whole story, which I have repeated so that you may remember better the groundwork of our plot.—Now, mind, you are to be an Armenian merchant who has seen them both in good health in Turkey. If, in accordance with Trufaldin's dream, I have chosen this scheme in preference to any other, it is because in books of adventures we find it a common thing for people to be taken at sea by Turkish pirates and to be afterwards restored to their family in the very nick of time, although fifteen or even twenty years may have passed away since they were thought to be dead. I have read a hundred stories of this kind, and it will do very well for us without our racking our brains to invent something else. It will answer as well as something original. You must say that they themselves told you how they were made slaves; and that you gave them money enough to pay for their ransom. But as some very urgent business called you away, you started at once before them; and Horace asked you to call on his father, whose circumstances he knows, and wait for you here a few days until they arrive.—Now, is the lesson clear enough?

LEL. All these repetitions are perfectly useless; from the very first, I have understood it all.

MASC. Well, then, I will go in and make a beginning.

LEL. I say, Mascarille, there is only one thing that troubles me: suppose he were to ask me to describe his son, what shall I say?

MASC. Well, that is a difficulty, that! Don't you see that the child was very young when he saw him last, and also that time and slavery must have changed him completely?

LEL. Yes, that's true. But tell me, if he knows me again, what shall I do?

MASC. What! are you entirely without memory? Did I not tell you already that, as he has only seen you for a

moment, he could not possibly remember you, and besides that your beard and your dress disguise you altogether.

LEL. All right, then; but by the bye, what part of Turkey? . . .

MASC. It does not matter, I tell you; Turkey or Barbary, it is all the same.

LEL. But the name of the town where I am supposed to have seen them?

MASC. Tunis.—He will keep me here all day, I believe. He says it is needless my repeating what I have to tell him, and yet I have mentioned the name of the town more than a dozen times already.

LEL. Go then, and prepare the way; I am quite ready.

MASC. At least be cautious, and behave reasonably. Let us have none of your private inventions this time.

LEL. Let me alone; how distrustful you always are!

MASC. Remember: Horace, a schoolboy in Bologna; Trufaldin, whose true name is Zanobio Ruberti, a citizen of Naples; the tutor, Alberto.

LEL. Ah! you make me ashamed of myself; do you take me for a blockhead that you keep on preaching to me after this fashion?

MASC. No, not quite, but something very nearly akin to it. (*Exit.*)

SCENE II.—LÉLIE (*alone*).

When I do not want him, he cringes like a beaten hound; now because he knows what need I have of him, he treats me to such remarks as the above. But I shall soon be in the full sunshine of those beautiful eyes, whose power holds me in so sweet a captivity; and without hindrance, in the most glowing colours, depict to her the torments of my soul. I shall then know what doom . . . but here they are.

SCENE III.—TRUFALDIN, LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

TRUF. Heaven be praised for this favourable turn of fortune.

MASC. You are the man to see visions and dream

dreams, since you prove how wrong is the saying that dreams are myths.

TRUF. (*to LÉLIE*). How can I thank you enough? How can I prove my gratitude to you, sir, you whom I ought to call a heavenly messenger, sent to give me good tidings?

LEL. These compliments are needless; I can dispense with them.

TRUF. (*to MASCARILLE*). I fancy I have seen somebody like this Armenian before, though I do not know where.

MASC. I was just saying the same thing to myself; but we see surprising likenesses sometimes.

TRUF. So you really have seen my only son in whom rest all my hopes.

LEL. Yes, Signor Trufaldin, and he was as well as possible.

TRUF. He related to you the history of his life, and spoke much of me?

LEL. Oh yes, thousands of times!

MASC. (*aside to LÉLIE*). Something less, I should think.

LEL. He described you just as I see you, your face, your manner

TRUF. How can that be possible, he has not seen me since he was seven years old. His tutor hardly could, after such a length of time, know my face again.

MASC. One's own flesh and blood always preserves the image of one's relations. This likeness is so deeply imprinted that my father

TRUF. Enough. Where was it you left him?

LEL. In Turkey, at Turin.

TRUF. Turin? but I thought that town was in Piedmont?

MASC. (*aside*). Oh! the numskull! (*to TRUFALDIN*) You do not understand him: he means to say Tunis; it was in reality there that he left your son; but Armenians have all a certain faulty pronunciation, and one very harsh to our ears: it consists in their changing *nis* into *rin*, so that when they mean to say Tunis, they say Turin.

TRUF. I should not have understood him, if you had not told me this. Did he tell you how and where to meet with his father?

MASC. (*aside*). He does not answer. (*after making signs to LÉLIE and pretending to fence*) I was just going through a pass or two. There was a time when not a man in Christendom could match me at that sport, and I have handled the foils in many a fencing-school.

TRUF. (*to MASCARILLE*). It is not what I care about for the present. (*to LÉLIE*) By what other name did he say I went?

MASC. Ah! Signor Zanobio Ruberti, how great is the joy that Heaven has now sent you!

LÉL. That is your true name; the other is assumed.

TRUF. But where did he tell you that he first saw the light?

MASC. Naples would seem a charming place to live in, but you must feel a decided aversion to it.

TRUF. Be silent, and do not interrupt our conversation in this fashion?

LÉL. Naples is the place where he first drew breath.

TRUF. Where did I send him when he was quite young, and under whose care?

MASC. That poor Alberto is highly to be praised, for having accompanied from Bologna the son you had committed to his care.

TRUF. Ah!

MASC. (*aside*). We are lost if this conversation lasts much longer.

TRUF. I should like you so much to tell me all their adventures; on what ship Providence, which ordered things so adverse

MASC. I cannot imagine what is the matter with me, I do nothing but yawn. Have you considered, Signor Trufaldin, that this stranger may want some refreshment, and that moreover it is getting late?

LÉL. No refreshment for me.

MASC. Oh! sir, you are more hungry than you imagine.

TRUF. Please to come in, then.

LÉL. After you.

MASC. (*to TRUFALDIN*). Sir, in Armenia the master of the house uses no ceremony. (*to LÉLIE, after TRUFALDIN is gone into the house*) You poor creature! have you not a word to say for yourself?

LEL. He took me by surprise at first; but do not fear; I have rallied my spirits, and I shall talk away boldly

MASC. Here comes our rival, who knows nothing of our plot. *(Exeunt.)*

SCENE IV.—ANSELME, LÉANDRE.

ANS. Pray stop, Léandre, and allow me for one moment to speak to you on a subject which relates to your peace and reputation. I do not come and speak to you as the father of Hippolyte, as a man who is interested in your welfare because of my own family, but as would speak your own father, anxious for your well-being; in short, as I should wish any honest man to come and speak to my own flesh and blood in like circumstance. Shall I tell you what is thought of this love of yours, which in one day has become the talk of the town?—to what ridicule and sneers your adventure of last night has everywhere given rise? what is thought of the whim which, they say, makes you select for a wife a street-walker, a common gipsy woman, whose noblest occupation is that of begging? I really blush for you even more than I do for myself, mixed up as I am in this public scandal; I who acquiesced in your demand of my daughter's hand, and who cannot see her slighted without feeling the insult you do us both. Léandre, I beseech you arise from the humiliation into which you have fallen, and consider your folly. If none of us are wise at all times, yet the shortest errors are always the best. When a man receives no other dowry than beauty from his wife, regret soon follows marriage, and the handsomest woman can hardly defend herself against the lukewarmness which follows. Let me tell you again that those ardent longings, those youthful transports, may give us a few pleasant moments, but that this bliss is of short duration, and, as our gratified passion cools, long unhappy days follow. Then succeed cares, anxieties, and miseries, —sons disinherited through their father's resentment.

LEAN. In all you have said, there is not one word my mind has not already represented to me. I know how much I am indebted to you for the great honour you desire to do me, but of which I am unworthy. In spite of the passion

that sways me, I have not lost the sense of the merit and virtue of your daughter. Therefore I resolved to try . . .

ANS. Somebody opens the door of this house; come away for fear some subtle poison should spread from it and seize you. *(Exeunt.)*

SCENE V.—LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

MASC. Our plan will soon break through if you go on making such palpable blunders.

LÉL. Am I for ever to bear with your reprimands? What are you complaining of? Have I not succeeded in everything I said since . . .

MASC. So, so! for instance, when you call the Turks heretics, and swear that they worship the sun and moon! Still, let that pass; what vexes me beyond measure is to see how you forget yourself near Célie. Your love is like a saucepan of milk which by too fierce a fire swells, mounts up to the brim, and runs over.

LÉL. Could anyone put a more thorough restraint upon himself? I hardly spoke to her.

MASC. Yes, but it is not sufficient to be restrained in your talk only. You gave more cause of suspicion in one moment by your manners at table, than others would have done in a whole year.

LÉL. How so?

MASC. How so? Why, anybody could have seen it. From the moment you found yourself at table, where Trufaldin had asked Célie to sit, you did nothing but look at her. Blushing, speechless, ogling Célie all the time, you never noticed what was given you. You only felt thirsty when she began to drink; then, eagerly snatching the glass out of her hands, without rinsing it or throwing a drop of it away, you drank it off, choosing in preference the side her lips had touched. Every morsel of bread her delicate hand had touched, or her teeth had bitten, you pounced upon as quickly as a cat does upon a mouse; and swallowed them like a glutton. But this is not all; you kept up under the table an unbearable shuffling noise with your feet, and twice Trufaldin's toes had to suffer from too hard a pressure, for which he punished some innocent dogs, who would have fallen out with you, had they dared.

—And you call that a right way of behaving yourself? For my part I was upon thorns, and, notwithstanding the cold, I feel even now all in a perspiration. I followed your every movement like a player follows the movement of his rolling bowl; like him, I twisted my body in a thousand ways, as if I could thus influence your actions.

LEL. Well, it is very easy for you to blame things, the pleasing cause of which you do not yourself feel; still, I am willing, in order to satisfy you, to try for once to master the love which tyrannises over me. In future . . .

SCENE VI.—TRUFALDIN, LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

MASC. We were speaking of the chequered life of your son.

TRUF. You do well. (*to LÉLIE*) Would you kindly give me leave to speak two words with him in private?

LEL. I should be very inconsiderate if I did not. (*LÉLIE goes into TRUFALDIN'S house.*)

SCENE VII.—TRUFALDIN, MASCARILLE.

TRUF. Listen to me: do you know what I have just been doing?

MASC. No; but I shall soon know it, no doubt.

TRUF. From a large and strong oak, nearly two hundred years old, I have just now cut off an excellent branch, chosen of a reasonable thickness, expressly for the purpose. Of this on the spot I have made a cudgel of about . . . (*showing his arm*)—yes, of about this thickness; not so thick at one end as at the other, but better fitted, I think, than a dozen ordinary switches, to belabour a pair of shoulders, for it is handy, green, knotty, and heavy.

MASC. And for the sake of whom, I pray you, did you take all this trouble?

TRUF. For you, first; then for that good creature who would palm one person upon me, and trick me out of another,—for this Armenian, this merchant in disguise, who by lies and pretence has introduced himself to me.

MASC. What! do you not believe . . .

TRUF. Do not try to impose on me: he himself fortu-

nately discovered his own trick, by telling Célie, whilst he squeezed her hand, that it was for her sake he had come thus disguised. He never noticed my little god-daughter Jeannette, who heard every word. I have no doubt, although he said nothing about it, that you are his cursed accomplice in all this.

MASC. Ah! you do me an injustice. If you are really imposed upon, I assure you that I was the first to be taken in with that story of his.

TRUF. Very well. Will you prove to me that you are speaking the truth? Assist me in turning him out; help me to thrash him soundly, and I will acquit you of all share in the crime.

MASC. Ay, ay, with all my heart; I'll dust his jacket for him so thoroughly that you will soon see I have had no hand in this matter. (*aside*) Ah! ah! Mr. Armenian, you shall feel it; you shall know what it is to spoil everything in this fashion.

SCENE VIII.—LÉLIE, TRUFALDIN, MASCARILLE.

TRUF. (*to LÉLIE, after having knocked at the door*). A word with you, pray. So, Mr. Impostor, this is the way you dare to deceive an honest man; this is the way you make game of him!

MASC. To pretend to have seen his son in another country, only to get the more easily into his house!

TRUF. (*beating LÉLIE*). Clear out! clear out this moment!

LEL. (*to MASCARILLE, who also beats him*). Oh! you scoundrel!

MASC. This is the way that cheats

LEL. Wretch!

MASC. Are served here. Keep that in remembrance of me!

LEL. What! Is a gentleman

MASC. (*still beating him*). Be off! be off, I tell you, or I'll give you such a thrashing

TRUF. That is well done. I am quite satisfied; come back into the house. (*MASCARILLE follows TRUFALDIN.*)

LEL. (*returning*). This to me! Such an insult to me by a servant! who would have expected treatment like

this from him? Could I imagine the insolent slave would thus ill-treat his master?

MASC. (*from TRUFALDIN'S window*). May I ask you how your shoulders feel?

LEL. What! you dare speak to me!

MASC. You see what it is not to have noticed Jeannette, and always to have a babbling tongue. For once I am not angry with you; I forbear storming and swearing at you, although you have behaved most imprudently; your shoulders have this time paid for the offence.

LEL. Ha! I'll be revenged for this treacherous behaviour.

MASC. You have brought all this upon your own head.

LEL. I?

MASC. If you were not so foolish, when you were speaking to your well-beloved, you would have perceived that Jeannette was close to you, and that her quick ears were drinking in all you said.

LEL. Could any one hear what I said to Célie?

MASC. How otherwise can you explain why you were so suddenly turned out of doors? I tell you, you are shut out for your own chattering. I do not know whether you often play at piquet, but you are a wonderful hand at throwing out your cards.

LEL. Oh! I am the most unfortunate of men! Still, why should I be driven away even by you?

MASC. I could do nothing better than take the task upon myself; in that way I escaped all suspicion of being either the inventor or the accomplice in this piece of deception.

LEL. At least you should have laid it on more gently.

MASC. No such fool! There was Trufaldin watching all my movements; and, besides, let me tell you that I was not at all sorry of that timely pretext for giving vent to my vexation. In short, the thing is done; and if only you will give me your word that you will not try to be revenged on me, either directly or indirectly, for the digs in the ribs I gave you with such hearty good-will, I will promise you that, with the help of the post I occupy here, I will satisfy your wishes before two days are over.

LEL. Although you have treated me so roughly, you can obtain anything from me with this promise!

MASC. You give me your word, then?

LEL. Very well, I give you my word.

MASC. But that is not sufficient; you must promise, besides, that you will never meddle with anything I may undertake.

LEL. Let it be so.

MASC. If you break your word, you deserve to be gibbeted.

LEL. But, on your side, mind you keep your promise of restoring me to peace and happiness.

MASC. Go and change your coat, and rub your back with ointment.

LEL. (*alone*). Must ill-luck always pursue me, and heap upon me misfortune upon misfortune?

MASC. (*coming out of TRUFALDIN'S house*). What! you are not gone yet; leave this place immediately, but, above all, mind you don't trouble your head about anything. I am working for you; let that satisfy you. Stir neither hand nor foot to help me in whatever I have in hand. (*alone*) Now let me think what is to be my next move.

SCENE IX.—ERGASTE, MASCARILLE.

ERG. Mascarille, I come to tell you a piece of news which will give a terrible blow to all your projects. At this very moment, while I am speaking to you, a young gipsy (not black, by the bye, and in appearance a gentleman) is on his way to Trufaldin. He is accompanied with a very haggard-looking old woman, and comes to buy this slave you wish to have. He seems very anxious about her.

MASC. It must be the lover Célie spoke to me of. Did one ever have a more perplexing fate? As soon as we are out of one mess we fall into another! It is vain for us to have the good news that Léandre has almost given up Célie, and will not trouble us any more; that his father, coming back unexpectedly, has turned the scales in favour of Hippolyte; that he has employed his power as a father to change everything, and that the marriage contract will be signed this very day. As soon as one rival withdraws,

a more dangerous one takes his place, and comes to deprive us of what little hope we had left. Still, thanks to my wonderful skill, I fancy I can stop their departure for a while, and give myself the necessary time to bring to an end this fine business. A great robbery has been committed of late; nobody knows by whom. Gipsies have not generally a very good reputation. I will just throw out some slight hints, and have this fellow imprisoned for a few days. I know some police-officers, thirsty administrators of justice, and always ready for such jobs. In their eager hope of a tip, there is nothing they would not rush into headlong, and with their eyes shut. The accused may be innocent, it matters not; the purse is guilty and must suffer.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—MASCARILLE, ERGASTE.

MASC. You ass! You doubly-distilled blockhead! You addle-headed spoony! Will there be no end to your persecutions?

ERG. Thanks to the diligence of the police-officer Balafre, your affair was going on splendidly; one moment more and the fellow was bagged. But suddenly your master appears on the scene, and, like a madman, ruined your plan. "I will never suffer," he cried out indignantly, "a respectable man to be treated so shamefully. I answer for him from his looks; I myself will be his bail." And as they resisted—not being willing to let go their man—he fell with such fury upon the constables, who are people terribly afraid of their skins, that even while I am speaking to you they must be running still, each man thinking he has a Lolie at his heels.

MASC. The fool does not know that this gipsy is already in the house, intent on carrying off his treasure.

ERG. Good-bye! I must leave you; I have some important business.

SCENE II.—MASCARILLE (*alone*).

There! I feel undone after such an extraordinary accident. One would think, and for myself I am almost persuaded it is so, that this meddling demon which possesses Lélie delights in setting me at defiance, and leads him purposely to the very places where his presence is sure to do mischief. Yet I won't give up. I am determined to play the game out, and in spite of all these reverses, to see who shall carry the day, his devil or I. Célie is on our side, and I think looks upon his departure with regret; I must profit by it.—Now to the execution of our plan, for there they are coming. That house yonder . . . yes, I can dispose of it pretty well as I like; if fate is for us, we are saved. Nobody lives there but myself, and I have the key. Dear me! how many adventures in so short a time, and to what expedients an intriguer is put! (*Enters the house.*)

SCENE III.—CÉLIE, ANDRÉ.

AND. You know, Célie, that I have left nothing undone to prove to you the strength of my love. When still young, the Venetians with whom I lived, had learnt to esteem my courage in war, and without wishing to flatter myself, I can say that I was sure of advancement had I continued in their service. But a change came over my heart; for you, Célie, I left everything, and your lover was soon numbered among your gipsy companions. Neither many unlooked-for events nor your indifference could master my perseverance in following you; and when at last an accident separated us for a much longer time than I expected, I spared neither time nor pains to meet with you again. At last I discovered the old gipsy woman, and hearing from her that you were left in pledge here, for a sum of money which was then of great consequence to your band and prevented their dispersion, I came in haste to break these mercenary chains and to receive from you whatever commands you were pleased to give. Now when I expected to see you joyful and happy, I find you sad and low-spirited. If you wish to live a retired

life, come with me to Venice, where out of the spoils taken in war, there will be enough for us both to live in peace. If, on the contrary, you want me still to follow you as before, I will do so, for my heart has no other ambition than that of being near you in whatever character you please.

CEL. I feel that your affection for me is most sincere, and I should be very ungrateful if I were sad because of it; my face does not express what I really feel, but shows merely that I have a painful headache. If I really have any influence over you, I should wish our voyage to be delayed for a few days, until this indisposition has passed away.

AND. We will put it off as long as you please: I have no other wish than to please you. Let us look for a house where you could stay.—Ah! this house to let will perhaps do.

SCENE IV.—CÉLIE, ANDRÉ, MASCARILLE (*disguised as a Swiss*).

AND. Are you the master of this house?

MASC. I am at your serfice.*

AND. Could we lodge here?

MASC. Yes, I hafe fery goot furnischt romes for schtrangers, put I vill not zose take what hafe not von goot name.

AND. Your house has a good reputation, I hope?

MASC. I see py your face zat you are von schtranger in zis toon.

AND. Yes.

MASC. Ist zis laty your vife?

AND. Sir?

MASC. Ist she your vife or your schwister?

AND. Neither.

MASC. Upon mine wort, she is fery pooty: come you on pisiness, or hafe you von process here? Ze process ist fery pat zing, he cost very moosch golt. Ze men of law are tiefes and ze atfocates roghues.

* Compare Hans Breitmann's ballads. It is worthy of notice that Molière hardens *b, d, g, v*, into *p, t, k, f*, but does not also soften *p, t, k, f*, into *b, d, g, v*, as Hans Breitmann does.

AND. We have nothing of the kind.

MASC. Ah! I see you hafe proucht ze yoong laty to valk apout here, and to see ze toon.

AND. Never mind what we have come for. (*to CÉLIE*) I will be with you again in a moment. I must go and fetch the old woman and countermand our travelling carriage.

MASC. Ist ze laty not vell?

AND. She has a headache.

MASC. I hafe goot vine and goot tscheese. Valk in; ko you into mine leetel house. (*CÉLIE, ANDRÉ, and MASCARILLE go into the house.*)

SCENE V.—LÉLIE (*alone*).

However impatient my heart may be, I am bound by my promise to keep quiet, to let another work for me, and to see, without attempting anything, how Heaven will decide my destiny.

SCENE VI.—ANDRÉ, LÉLIE.

LEL. (*to ANDRÉ, coming out of the house*). Were you inquiring for anybody in that house?

AND. No; I have just taken some furnished apartments there.

LEL. There? The house belongs to my father, and my servant sleeps in it at night to take care of it.

AND. How can that be? The bills at least show that it is to let; read for yourself.

LEL. It seems so. Well, that is strange, I must say. Who the deuce could have put that bill up, and for what purpose . . . ? Oh! I have it! It can only be somebody I know, and I can pretty well guess what for.

AND. May I ask you what that may be?

LEL. I would not tell anybody else, but it can be of no consequence to you, and I feel sure you will be cautious how you speak of it. I have no doubt that the bill you see there was put up—at least I should think so—to forward some scheme or other of the servant I was speaking to you about, in order that he may secure for me a certain

gipsy girl with whom I am deeply in love, and whom I must have at any cost. I have already failed to obtain her several times in spite of all our attempts.

AND. Her name is ?

LEL. Célie.

AND. Ah, indeed! what a pity you did not mention this to me sooner! I could no doubt have spared you all the trouble this trick might cost you.

LEL. You don't mean to say so! do you know her, then?

AND. Why, it is I who have just bought her.

LEL. You do surprise me!

AND. As the state of her health prevented us from travelling, I had just taken this apartment for her; but I am exceedingly glad that you should have told me of your intentions.

LEL. What! shall I through your help obtain the happiness I have been wishing for so long? Could you

AND. (*knocking at the door*). You shall be satisfied about that in a moment.

LEL. What can I say to you, and what thanks ?

AND. No, no, I will have no thanks.

SCENE VII.—LÉLIE, ANDRÉ, MASCARILLE.

MASC. (*aside*). Hang it all! there is my fool of a master. Now we shall have some new mishap.

LEL. Who would have known you again in this absurd dress? Come here, Mascarille; you are welcome.

MASC. I am von man of honour; I am not one maquerelle; I sell not the woman nor the girl.

LEL. How amusing to hear you talk! Your gibberish is really very good!

MASC. Ko you apout your pisiness and larfe you not at me.

LEL. Come, come, have done, and acknowledge your master.

MASC. Ze teufel take you! I know you not.

LEL. Everything is settled; take off your disguise.

MASC. If you not marsch, I vill gife you von goot schlapp an ze face.

LEL. Your German jargon is no longer necessary. I tell you we are agreed. I owe everything to his generosity; I have all that I could possibly wish for; and you have no reason to be under any apprehension whatever.

MASC. Oh! if by good luck you are really agreed, I willingly become myself again.

AND. This servant serves you with much zeal. Please wait a little; I will return to you presently.

SCENE VIII.—LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

LEL. And now, Mascarille, what will you say next?

MASC. That I am delighted to see success at last crown our labours.

LEL. You were very slow in giving way and throwing off your disguise. You could hardly believe in such a happy ending, could you?

MASC. As I know you, I must say I was rather afraid; and even now I have my doubts.

LEL. Acknowledge, at least, that I have done great things, and have made up for my previous stupidity. With me remains the honour of having given the finishing-stroke to our enterprise.

MASC. Let it be so. You will have been much more lucky than wise.

SCENE IX.—CÉLIE, ANDRÉ, LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

AND. Is not this the lady you were speaking of to me?

LEL. Heavens! No happiness can equal mine!

AND. It is true that I am greatly indebted to you for the service you rendered me just now; I should be very ungrateful if I did not acknowledge it. Still, this service would be too dearly bought were I to repay it at the expense of my heart. I ask you to judge by the rapture her beauty causes me, whether I ought to acquit my debt at such a cost. You are too generous; you would not ask such a thing of me. Farewell. We will go back into Trufaldin's house and stop there a few days. (*Goes away with CÉLIE.*)

SCENE X.—LÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

MASC. (*after singing for some time*). I laugh and sing, but in truth I feel no inclination for it. Yes, you are evidently agreed; he gives up Célie to you and no mistake. —You understand by this time, I suppose?

LEL. It is too much! No, I will trouble you no more. I am a greenhorn, and an innocent fool, unworthy of all your care, and utterly incapable of doing anything. Let me alone; cease attempting anything for a luckless fellow who will not allow himself to be made happy. After so many misfortunes, after such hopeless blundering, nothing remains for me but death. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XI.—MASCARILLE (*alone*).

He has found out the right road of improving his fortunes. There is, in short, nothing wanting to crown the edifice but this last folly of killing himself! But in vain does his anger at all his faults urge him to free me from my trouble and devotion to his interests. Happen what may, I am determined to serve him in spite of himself, and conquer the very devil that is in him. The greater the obstacles, the greater the glory: difficulties are but the handmaids to virtue; they render it more attractive by adorning it.

SCENE XII.—CÉLIE, MASCARILLE.

CÉL. (*to MASCARILLE, who has been whispering to her*). Say what you will, Mascarille, and let them do what they can, I expect very little from all this delay. We have seen already how they are likely to agree; and I told you before, that my heart would not wrong one to satisfy the other. I am greatly attached to both, although in a very different way. For Lélie there is love, its power and attractions; for André, a deep gratitude, which will not allow me, even in my inmost thoughts, to do anything that would wound his feelings. Yes, I think it but right, that if I cannot bring myself to look upon him as he wishes, if I cannot bring my heart to crown his love with the gift of

my hand, at least I ought to refuse to another what I refuse to him, and to do as much violence to my own feelings, as I force him to do to his. These are the difficulties honour throws in the way of your schemes; judge therefore what room there is left for hope.

MASC. Very little, I must acknowledge; these obstacles are great. I have not the power of working miracles, but I will do my utmost—move heaven and earth, and leave no stone unturned to try and find some happy expedient to get out of this dilemma. I will tell you presently what I think. *(Exit.)*

SCENE XIII.—HIPPOLYTE, CÉLIE.

HIP. Ever since you came among us, the ladies of the neighbourhood may well complain of the havoc caused by your eyes, for you deprive them of their dearest conquests, and make all their lovers faithless. No heart can escape the darts with which you strike. Thousands offer themselves daily at the altar of your charms, and impoverish us by enriching you. As for myself, however, I would not complain of the irresistible sway of your wondrous beauty, if, when my lovers forsook me for you, one only had remained to comfort me for the loss of the others. But that you should have left me none, seems too inhuman, and I must fain complain.

CEL. Madam, you rally with a good grace, but I beg of you to have a little pity upon me. Your eyes know their own power too well ever to dread anything from what mine can do; they are too conscious of their own loveliness to nurse such misgivings.

HIP. And yet what I tell you now, everybody here has felt. Without mentioning any one else, it is well known that Célie has made a deep impression on both Léandre and Lélie.

CEL. I believe that, if they could have committed such a mistake, you would find it easy to comfort yourself for their loss, and that you would think beneath your notice, lovers who could make so bad a choice.

HIP. On the contrary, I speak with very different feelings. I am myself so struck with your beauty, I see in it

such excuse for the inconstancy of those who are won by it, that I have not the courage to blame Léandre for having fallen into your chains, and for having been false to his first love. I hope soon, without hatred and without anger, to see him return to me through the expostulation of his father.

SCENE XIV.—CÉLIE, HIPPOLYTE, MASCARILLE.

MASC. Great, great, and good news! Hear what I have to tell, and rejoice with me.

CEL. What is it?

MASC. Here we have, without any compliments

CEL. What?

MASC. The last scene of a true and genuine comedy!—The old gipsy woman was, but this very moment

CEL. Well, go on.

MASC. Was crossing the market-place, thinking no harm, when another ugly old woman, after having closely stared at her for some time, suddenly burst forth into a torrent of abuse. This became the signal of a furious combat, where, instead of guns, daggers, or arrows, nothing was seen aloft but four withered claws, with which the two combatants did their utmost to tear off the little flesh time had left on their bones. All the time nothing was heard but the words vixen, drab, slut! From the very first, their caps flew off, leaving a couple of bald pates exposed to view, which rendered the battle painfully ridiculous. So great was their fury that André and Trufaldin, like many others attracted by the tumult, found it very difficult to part them. As the storm abated, each one strove to hide the nakedness of her head; and while they were being asked what had put them into such a passion, the first who had begun the affray, scrutinizing Trufaldin's features in spite of the excitement from which she had not yet recovered, suddenly exclaimed, "It is you, for certain, unless my sight greatly deceives me,—it is you who, I was told, was living unknown in this place. O most happy chance! Yes, Signor Zanobio Ruberti, I have the good fortune of meeting you at the very moment when I felt so concerned about your welfare. You remember that when you left your family at Naples,

I was the nurse of your daughter, who at four years old already showed in a thousand different ways the charms and beauty she would one day possess. This woman you see there, this infamous hag, introducing herself into our house with a semblance of friendship, robbed me of that treasure. Your poor wife, alas! gave way to such an excess of grief, that I truly believe it shortened her days. I, fearing your just resentment and reproaches, sent you word that both mother and daughter were dead. But now that I have discovered this wicked woman here, she must tell us what she has done with your daughter." At the name of Zanobio Ruberti, which she repeated several times during the story, André, pale and agitated, said to Trufaldin, who was listening, dumb with surprise, "Father, I am Horace, your son! At last Heaven has led me to your arms, after I have for so long sought you in vain! Yet I saw you without knowing you,—you the author of my being! Listen, father: when Alberto died, I felt strange uneasiness in my mind. I left Bologna, and, giving up all my studies, for more than six years I wandered about in different places, urged on by my desire of seeing and hearing new things. Then, however, a secret longing for my family brought me back to my country; but, alas! you were no longer in Naples, and I could only hear vague reports about you; so that, after having in vain sought to meet with you, I stayed a while in Venice, and ceased my aimless wanderings. From that time to the present moment I have lived without knowing anything of my family but the name." I leave you to judge if, during all this speech, Trufaldin was agitated. In a word, to cut matters short, since you will have every opportunity of questioning your old nurse by and by, Trufaldin owns you now for his daughter; André is your brother, and consequently cannot think of marrying you. The obligation he says he is under has made him prevail upon your father to give you in marriage to my young master. To this his own father readily consents. To complete the happiness of the family, Pandolfe proposes that the newly-found Horace should marry his daughter. Here are a number of incidents for you at one time!

CEL. Such tidings perfectly bewilder me.

MASC. They are all coming here, except the two female champions, who are arranging their toilet after the turmoil of the battle. (*to HIPPOLYTE*) Léandre is among them, and your father also. I am going to inform my master of all this, and to show him how, when we were at the height of disappointment and despair, Heaven has almost wrought a miracle in his favour. (*Exit MASCARILLE.*)

HIP. I experience such true joy, that, had all this happened to myself, I could not feel more delighted. But here they come.

SCENE XV.—TRUFALDIN, ANSELME, PANDOLFE, CÉLIE,
HIPPOLYTE, LÉANDRE.

TRUF. My child!

CEL. My father!

TRUF. Do you already know how Heaven has blessed us?

CEL. Yes. I have just been told of this wonderful chain of events.

HIP. (*to LÉANDRE*). It is needless for you to try and excuse yourself for your temporary infidelity; my eyes behold the beauty that caused it.

LEAN. I ask for nothing but a generous forgiveness, and I take Heaven to witness that, although I return so suddenly to my first love, my father has done much less to influence me than the wish of my own heart.

AND. (*to CÉLIE*). Who could ever have thought that so pure a love might one day be condemned by nature! However, as it always was under the keeping of the most rigid honour, I can, by changing its nature slightly, still retain it.

CEL. As for me, I blamed myself, and thought it wrong in me, to feel nothing for you but the greatest esteem. I could not understand what powerful obstacle stopped me in a path so pleasing and so dangerous, and prevented me from acknowledging a love which my senses tried in vain to communicate to my heart.

TRUF. (*to CÉLIE*). But what will you say of me, my daughter, if, though I have only just found you again, I already think of parting with you? I have promised your hand to this gentleman's son.

CEL. That your will, my father, is now my law.

SCENE XVI.—TRUFALDIN, ANSELME, PANDOLFE, CÉLIE, HIPPOLYTE, LÉLIE, LÉANDRE, ANDRÉ, MASCARILLE.

MASC. (*to LÉLIE*). Now let us see if this devil of yours will have power enough to cheat you of a hope based on such solid foundations, and whether you will bring the strength of your inventive powers to bear against your wonderful good luck. By a most unexpected turn of fortune, your desires are crowned with success,—Célie is yours.

LEL. O Heaven! am I to believe that your omnipotence

TRUF. Yes, my son-in-law, it is really true.

PAND. The matter is settled.

AND. (*to LÉLIE*). Thus I have acquitted myself of my obligation to you.

LEL. (*to MASCARILLE*). I must embrace you a thousand times, and a thousand times in this my great joy

MASC. Oh! oh! gently, I beg of you. He has almost stifled me. I am greatly afraid for Célie, if you kiss her with this energy. I would rather be excused such embraces.

TRUF. (*to LÉLIE*). You know how much Heaven has blessed me; but since, thus suddenly, happiness has come not to me alone, but to us all, let us not part till the day is ended. Let Léandre's father also be sent for immediately.

MASC. Now you are all provided for. Is there not some good girl to take pity upon poor Mascarille? To see thus every lad have his lass, gives me a strange wish to be married also.

ANS. I know a girl to suit you.

MASC. Let us go, then, and may propitious Heaven grant us sweet babes of our own begetting!

LOVERS' QUARRELS.

(LE DÉPIT AMOUREUX.)

'Le Dépit Amoureux' was played for the first time at Béziers, towards the end of 1656, where it had as great a success as in Paris in 1658, at the Théâtre du Petit Bourbon, in the Louvre.

Molière acted the part of Albert.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.



ÉRASTE, *in love with* LUCILE.

ALBERT, *father to* LUCILE *and* ASCAGNE.

GROS-RENÉ, *valet to* ÉRASTE.

VALÈRE, *son to* POLIDORE.

POLIDORE, *father to* VALÈRE.

MASCARILLE, *valet to* VALÈRE.

MÉTAPHRASTE, *a pedant.*

LA RAPIÈRE, *a bravo.*

LUCILE, *daughter to* ALBERT.

MARINETTE, *maid to* LUCILE.

ASCAGNE, *daughter to* ALBERT, *disguised as a man.*

FROSINE, *confidant to* ASCAGNE.



The scene is in Paris.

LOVERS' QUARRELS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—ÉRASTE, GROS-RENÉ.

ERAST. What shall I say? A secret uneasiness leaves my mind no rest. Yes; whatever you may tell me of my love, I am afraid of being deceived. I even fear that, in favour of a rival, your fidelity may be tampered with; or perhaps, rather, that you are deceived, as well as I.

GR.-RE. As for suspecting me of any unfair trick, I must say (and I mean no offence to your worshipful love) that you very unjustly wound my honest pride, and also that you must have very little knowledge of physiognomy. People of my make and shape are seldom suspected, thank Heaven! of being either cheats or knaves. I, on my part, do not belie this honour paid to bulk: there's nothing small about me.* It is very possible that I may be deceived—there's more reason to suppose that, still I don't believe it. I cannot, for the life of me, see what motive you have to fret as you do. As far as I can judge, Lucile gives you enough proofs of her love. She sees you and talks with you at all hours of the day; and Valère, who is the cause of your fear, seems, to me to be only on sufferance after all.

ERAST. A lover is often buoyed up with false hope. He, who, to all appearances, is the best received, is not always the most beloved; and many a time, the display women make of affection is but a delicate veil they use to

* Du Parc, who played the part of Gros-René, was very stout. Compare Molière's allusion to the lameness of Béjart in *L'Avare*, Act i. Sc. iii.

cover their real feelings for another. In short, to my mind, Valère has shown too much equanimity of late for a discarded lover, and the quiet laugh or show of indifference with which he notices every one of those favours she bestows on me, and which you think so much of, embitters what in them should most delight me. This is the cause of the sorrow you seem unable to understand; it is what makes me doubt of my good fortune, and renders it difficult for me to trust entirely to all that Lucile says. That Valère should be jealous is necessary to my happiness. Were I to see him in a state of great vexation and impatience, then my mind would be at ease. Now, tell me frankly, do you not really think with me, that one could hardly look with such bland satisfaction upon a rival's success? and, if you think so, acknowledge that I have good grounds to be perplexed.

GR.-RE. Perhaps he has looked elsewhere for happiness, when he saw his love rejected here.

ERAST. No, no! When, after repeated rebuffs, we try to free ourselves from the love that enthrals us, our first care is to avoid the cause of our suffering. Our heart does not break its chains so quietly that nothing remains but mere indifference. On the contrary, if our dislike increases, our love is but watching the opportunity for returning into our bosom. In fact, believe me, however well we may succeed in conquering our passion, there will still be jealousy in our heart; and we cannot see, without bitterness, that another has won the very love all our efforts have failed to secure.

GR.-RE. For my part, I cannot enter into all this philosophizing; I simply trust what my eyes see, and I am not such an enemy to my peace of mind, as to go and torment myself without a cause, or the shadow of a cause. Why should I subtilise, and pretend to a knowledge which I do not possess, and all to render myself more wretched? Shall I pine away, and grow miserable upon unfounded suspicions? Why drink the dregs of imaginary cups? I reckon grief a very uncomfortable thing, and I'll never give way to it but with good and just cause. Nay, more, I often see a hundred reasons for being sad; but I do not choose to give way to sadness. I run the same risk in love as you do. What happens to you must necessarily happen

to me; for the mistress could hardly be faithless to you, without the servant being so to me. Still, I carefully avoid all thoughts of the kind; I mean to trust people, and if any one says to me, "*I love you*," I shall not go and inquire, in order to esteem myself happy, whether Mascarille tears the hair off his head or not. Let Marinette but suffer herself to be kissed and caressed by me as much as I please, my rival may laugh at it like mad; I can laugh as well as he, and we'll see who laughs with the better grace.

ERAST. Yes; this is always your way of talking.

GR.-RE. But, look! there she is coming.

SCENE II.—ERASTE, MARINETTE, GROS-RENÉ.

GR.-RE. Hist! I say, there! Marinette!

MAR. Hallo! what are you doing here?

GR.-RE. What I'm doing! why, talking of you to be sure.

MAR. Ah! there you are also, sir! Why, for the last hour I have been tramping it all over the place after you. Slap my face, if I hav'n't.

ERAST. After me!

MAR. I have taken more than ten thousand steps to look for you; and I'll vouch for it

ERAST. What?

MAR. That you were neither at church, at home, in the public promenade, nor in the Place Royale.

GR.-RE. You might have sworn to that.

ERAST. But, pray, who is it sent you to look for me?

MAR. Somebody, believe me, who is far from being badly disposed towards you;—my mistress, in fact.

ERAST. Ah, dear Marinette! Are your words the true interpreters of her heart? Do not hide from me some fatal secret: I should bear you no malice for it. For Heaven's sake, tell me the truth: tell me if your lovely mistress does not assume towards me a love she does not feel.

MAR. Ha! ha! What a queer idea to take into your head! Does she not show you clearly enough what she feels? What other proofs does your love require? What would it ask besides?

GR.-RE. That Valère should go and hang himself.

Nothing but some such trifle as that will set his heart at rest.

MAR. But why?

GR.-RE. He is so terribly jealous.

MAR. Jealous of Valère? Well, that is a ridiculous fancy! It can only be the fruit of your own imagination. I took you for a man of sense, and until now, had full belief in your judgment; but, as far as I can see, I was very much mistaken.—And you, sir, has any share of this delusion entered your pate?

GR.-RE. I, jealous!—Heaven forbid! Keep me from being so foolish as to go and lose all my fat over such worry. I trust entirely the fidelity of your heart; and, besides, I have too good an opinion of myself to think that any one could please you after me. Where the deuce could you find another of my worth?

MAR. Now, come; you talk sense. This is as it should be. A jealous man should never suffer his suspicions to come to light; all he gains by it is to injure himself, and forward the cause of his rival. Sorrowful reproaches often open the eyes of a mistress to the merit of another, and I know of one who owes his happiness entirely to the great anxiety of his jealous rival. In short, to show distrust in love is to act a very foolish part, and at the best to make oneself wretched upon mere conjecture: (to ERASTE) This to you, sir.

ERAST. Very well; let us say no more about it. What is it you wanted to tell me?

MAR. You richly deserve to be kept in suspense, and that, as a punishment, I should take my own time to tell you the important news which has made me hunt for you everywhere. But, here; read this letter, and let us hear no more about your doubts and fears. You can read it aloud; there is nobody near to hear us.

ERAST. (reads). "*You told me your love would attempt anything; it may be crowned this very day, if you can but obtain my father's consent. Tell him of the power you have acquired over my heart; I give you full leave. If he returns you a favourable answer, be sure of my obedience.*" Ah, what delightful news! You, who have brought it to me, are as welcome as a messenger from the gods.

GR.-RE. I told you so, but you would not believe me. I am rarely mistaken in what I think.

ERAST. (reads again). "*Tell him of the power you have acquired over my heart; I give you full leave. If he returns you a favourable answer, be sure of my obedience.*"

MAR. If I went and told her of the weakness you have just shown, she would soon recall her letter.

ERAST. Pray, hide from her a passing fear which, for a moment, made a dark suspicion appear like truth to my mind; or, if you tell her of it, add that I am ready to expiate my folly, even with my death; that if I have been unfortunate enough to incur her displeasure, I will sacrifice my life at her feet.

MAR. Don't let us talk of dying; this isn't the time for it.

ERAST. You lay me, however, under a great obligation, and I will soon reward, in a handsome manner, the trouble that so kind and pretty a messenger has taken for me.

MAR. Oh! that reminds me. Can you guess where else I went to look for you, just now?

ERAST. No.

MAR. Close to the market; you know where I mean?

ERAST. Where do you say?

MAR. There . . . in that shop; don't you remember where, a month ago, out of the goodness of your heart, you generously promised to give me a ring.

ERAST. Oh! I understand.

GR.-RE. The sly wench!

ERAST. You are right. I have put off too long making good my promise to you, but . . .

MAR. I did not say that to press you, sir, you may be sure . . .

GR.-RE. Oh dear no!

ERAST. (*giving her his ring*). This one may be to your taste perhaps; accept it instead of the one I owe you.

MAR. Sir, you are joking; I should be ashamed to take it.

GR.-RE. Poor shame-faced creature; take it without more ado. Only fools refuse what is offered to them.

MAR. I only accept it, that I may have something to remind me of you.

ERAST. When shall I be able to thank my dear angel?

MAR. First try to gain over her father.

ERAST. But if he refuses me, ought I

MAR. Whatever may happen, I will do all I can for you. By some means or other she must be yours. Do your utmost on your side, and be sure we will do as much on ours.

ERAST. Good-bye! We shall know our fate before the day is over. (*ERASTE reads to himself.*)

MAR. (*to GROS RENÉ.*) Well! and what about our love? You do not speak of it.

GR.-RE. When people like ourselves want to be married, the thing is soon settled. I want you for my wife; will you have me for your husband?

MAR. With all my heart.

GR.-RE. Shake hands over it.—That's enough.

MAR. Farewell, Gros-René! my heart's desire!

GR.-RE. Farewell, my star!

MAR. Farewell, firebrand of my passion!

GR.-RE. Farewell, dear comet! farewell, dear rainbow of my soul! (*exit MARINETTE.*) Heaven be praised, our affairs are going on splendidly. Albert is not a man to refuse you anything.

ERAST. Valère is coming this way.

GR.-RE. Poor fellow! I pity him, after what we know.

SCENE III.—VALÈRE, ÉRASTE, GROS-RENÉ.

ERAST. Well, Valère!

VAL. Well, Eraste!

ERAST. How is your love progressing?

VAL. And how your tender passion?

ERAST. It grows stronger and stronger every day.

VAL. And mine every day greater and greater.

ERAST. For Lucile?

VAL. For her.

ERAST. I must acknowledge that you are a rare pattern of constancy.

VAL. And I that your perseverance will be a rare example to posterity.

ERAST. As far as I am concerned, I care very little for

that austere kind of love which is satisfied with looks only. Nor do I enjoy those exalted feelings, which make one bear meekly with ill-treatment. In short, when I love truly, I like to see my love returned.

VAL. Most natural; it is exactly what I feel. Were I in love with the greatest beauty, I would never pay my homage to her, if I were not loved in return.

ERAST. Yet, Lucile

VAL. In the heart of Lucile I find all my love can desire.

ERAST. You must be easily satisfied.

VAL. Not so easily as you may fancy.

ERAST. Yet I have reason to believe, without vanity, that I have her love.

VAL. I know for certain that I have a very good share of it.

ERAST. Take my advice; do not deceive yourself.

VAL. Take my advice; do not trust too much to your credulous eyes.

ERAST. If I dared to show you a sure proof that her heart but no, your grief would be too great.

VAL. If I dared to discover a secret to you but no, your despair would be too real, and I wish to be discreet.

ERAST. This is too much! Although greatly against my wish, I must lessen your presumption. Read.

VAL. (*after having read*). These are tender words.

ERAST. You know the hand-writing?

VAL. Yes; it is Lucile's.

ERAST. Well, and that hope so certain

VAL. (*laughing, and going away*). Good-bye, Eraste!

GR.-RE. He must be mad. Where can he see cause for laughter?

ERAST. I am confounded; and I cannot understand what diabolical mystery is hidden under all this!

GR.-RE. Is not that his servant coming?

ERAST. Yes, it is; let us dissemble, and set him talking about his master's love.

SCENE IV.—ÉRASTE, MASCARILLE, GROS-RENÉ.

MASC. (*aside*). No. I do not believe there is a more

trying position than to have a young master deep in love.

GR.-RE. Good morning.

MASC. Good morning.

GR.-RE. Where is Mascarille going now? What is he doing? Is he coming back? Is he going away? or will he stay where he is?

MASC. No, I am not coming back, for I have not yet been; nor am I going, for I have stopped; nor do I stay, for this very moment I am off.

ERAST. Closely argued! But wait a moment, Mascarille.

MASC. Sir; your servant; good morning, sir.

ERAST. You are in a great hurry to run away from us. What! are you afraid of me?

MASC. Sir, you are too courteous for me to be afraid.

ERAST. Shake hands; we have no longer cause for jealousy. Let us be friends; I have given up my love. Henceforth I leave you free room for all your dreams of happiness.

MASC. Would to Heaven it were true!

ERAST. Gros-René knows that I am thinking of some one else.

GR.-RE. It is true; and I also give up Marinette to you.

MASC. Never mind Marinette; our rivalry is not likely to go to any great lengths. But is it certain, sir, that you are no longer in love, or are you only joking?

ERAST. It has been proved to me that your master is but too fortunate in his passion, and it would be foolery on my part to pretend to the earnest love which is granted to him alone.

MASC. Upon my word you relieve me greatly with this news. Though I was rather afraid of you with regard to our schemes, you do right to beat a timely retreat. Yes, you do quite right to give up loving a woman who only kept you near her to deceive you. I who knew all that was going on behind your back, pitied you a thousand times for the vain hopes you cherished, for I knew they would never be realized. It is a shame thus to abuse a man of honour!—But now I think of it, how the deuce did you get at the truth? For that mutual engagement of the lovers had only for witnesses night, myself, and two

other persons; and the tying of the knot which satisfies their passion is thought to be a very great secret.

ERAST. How! What! What is that you say?

MASC. I only say that I am astounded, and cannot imagine, sir, who can have told you that, under the false pretences which have deceived you and everybody else, their love had no rest till they were secretly married.

ERAST. You lie!

MASC. Sir, as you please.

ERAST. You are a scoundrel!

MASC. Be it so.

ERAST. And this impudence deserves a sound thrashing on the spot.

MASC. I am in your power.

ERAST. Ah! Gros-René!

GR.-RE. Sir.

ERAST. I am contradicting a story which I fear is but too true. (*to MASCARILLE*) You want to run away?

MASC. I, sir? no, sir.

ERAST. What! Lucile is married to . . . ?

MASC. Sir, I was only joking.

ERAST. Ha! you were joking, you villain!

MASC. No, I was not joking.

ERAST. Is it true, then?

MASC. No, I do not say that.

ERAST. What do you say then?

MASC. Alas! I say nothing, for fear of saying something wrong.

ERAST. Swear, whether what you said was the truth or a lie.

MASC. It shall be what you please; I have no intention of contradicting you.

ERAST. (*drawing his sword*). Will you tell me or not? This will loosen your tongue without more ado.

MASC. It will be sure to speak foolishly again; better give me a good cudgelling on the spot, and let me run away.

ERAST. Die, or tell me the truth.

MASC. Well, I will tell it then; but perhaps, sir, I shall vex you.

ERAST. Speak, and mind what you say. Nothing can

save you from my righteous anger if you say one word that is not true.

MASC. I agree to it. Break every bone I've got; nay, kill me outright, if in all I have said, I have uttered one single falsehood.

ERAST. This marriage is no invention, then?

MASC. I see now that my tongue played me false; but, all the same, it is as I tell you, and it was after five evening visits, during which you were employed as a blind to cover their scheme, that they were united. It was the day before yesterday. Since that time, Lucile hides more carefully than ever the violent love she feels for my master, and wishes him to ascribe everything that he sees her do for you, to the great prudence necessary to prevent the discovery of their secret. If, in spite of all my assurances, you still doubt the truth of what I say, let Gros-René come some night with me, and, as I stand sentinel, I will show him that we have free access to her.

ERAST. Out of my sight, you scoundrel!

MASC. I wish for nothing better.

SCENE V.—ÉRASTE, GROS-RENÉ.

ERAST. Well?

GR.-RE. Sir, we are both finely caught, supposing he speaks the truth.

ERAST. Ah! believe me, the odious villain has spoken the truth but too well. I see that what he says is very likely to have taken place. What Valère did on seeing this letter, only shows the good understanding there is between them, and that it is a ruse intended to hide the love the false girl has for him.

SCENE VI.—ÉRASTE, MARINETTE, GROS-RENÉ.

MAR. I come to tell you that my mistress will expect to see you this evening in the garden.

ERAST. How dare you speak to me, you double-faced traitress? Get out of my sight! and tell your mistress to trouble me no more with her letters. See, false wretch!

the respect I have for them. (*Tears up the letter and goes out.*)

MAR. Tell me, Gros-René

GR-RE. Dare you address me, perfidious woman! deceitful crocodile! whose base heart is worse than that of a Satrap or a Lestrygon! Go! carry our answer to your worthy mistress, and make her understand that, in spite of all her cunning, my master and I are no longer fools, and that she and you may both go to the devil together.

(*Exit.*)

MAR. (*alone*). Poor Marinette, are you really awake? What possesses them now? What! do they receive our favours in that fashion? Oh! how astounded my poor mistress will be!

ACT II.

SCENE I.—ASCAGNE, FROSINE.

FROS. Surely, Ascagne, you know that I can keep a secret.

ASC. But are we safe here? let us take care that nobody surprises us, or overhears what we say.

FROS. We are much safer here than at home. We can see all around us, and can speak in perfect security.

ASC. Alas! how difficult it is for me to begin!

FROS. Bless me! Is this, then, such a very important secret?

ASC. So important that I fear to disclose it, even to you; and you should not know it, if I could hide it any longer.

FROS. Ah! you grieve and insult me. Do you really hesitate to open your heart to me, when you know how discreet I have always been! I, brought up with you, and who have kept secret things of such importance to you! I, who know

ASC. Yes, you know the secret reason which forces me to conceal from the world my sex and my family. You know that in this house, where I was brought up, I personify the young Ascagne since his death, in order to preserve the inheritance, which otherwise would have

fallen into other hands. It is because you know all this that I dare to open my heart to you. But, before I say more, clear up, Frosine, a doubt which always harasses me. Is it possible that Albert should know nothing of the mystery which thus disguises my sex, and has made him my father?

FROS. To tell you the truth, this matter you urge me to clear up, has often puzzled me. I have never been able to get at the bottom of this intrigue; nor could my mother enlighten me on the subject. All I know is, that Albert's son was to inherit an immense fortune, bequeathed to him, even before his birth, by a very wealthy uncle. When that child, so dear to his parents, died, his mother kept his death secret, for fear that the blow which would thus fall on her husband—absent at the time—should prove fatal to him; for all that great inheritance, which was such an advantage to his family, would thus pass into other hands. She then formed the plan of putting you in the place of her lost son, and you were taken from us, with whom you were nursed. Your mother consented to the deceit, and everyone was bribed to keep the secret. Albert has never heard of it through us; and as his wife kept it for twelve years, and died suddenly without having time to disclose anything, I do not know who could have told him. I see, however, that he keeps up an acquaintance with your mother, and I hear that he helps her in private. It is not likely that this is done without some reason. On the other hand, he urges you to marry. This, as he arranges the match, is rather perplexing, unless he knows that you took the place of his son, but does know that you are a girl.—But this digression would carry us too far: let us now return to your secret, which I long so much to hear.

ASC. You must know, then, that though I may hide my sex to others, Love cannot be deceived; and that his treacherous darts have known how to wound a weak maiden's heart beneath the dress she assumes.

FROS. You in love!

ASC. Yes, Frosine; but you have not yet great cause to be surprised. My trembling heart has something to tell you which will indeed astonish you.

FROS. What is it?

ASC. I love Valère.

FROS. Ah! you are right to love one whose family your imposture deprives of a great inheritance, and who, if he had the least suspicion of your sex, would immediately see that fortune return to him. Yes, this is a greater cause for surprise.

ASC. But this is not all; what will you say, Frosine, if I tell you that I am his wife?

FROS. Good heavens! his wife!

ASC. Yes; his wife.

FROS. Ah! this is beyond everything, and is more than I can understand.

ASC. That is not all.

FROS. Not all!

ASC. I am his wife without his knowing it, and without his having the slightest idea who I really am.

FROS. Well, go on, go on; I give in. I have no means left to express my astonishment. My senses give way before this crush of news. Such enigmas are beyond my comprehension.

ASC. I will explain it all to you, if you will listen. Valère, having fallen in love with my sister, seemed to me a lover worthy of being listened to. I could not bear to see his addresses rejected without feeling for him in my heart. I wanted Lucile to be happy in his presence; I blamed her for her coldness, and blamed her so effectually, that I soon found myself under the sway of that passion I had tried to force upon her. When he spoke to her, he persuaded me; with the sighs he lost upon her, he won me; and the love rejected by the object of his passion entered like a conqueror into my breast. Thus, Frosine, my weak heart, alas! gave itself up to a love not intended for it. It was wounded as by a side-thrust, and with heavy interest paid another's debt. At last, Frosine, I declared myself to him, but under the name of another. One night he thought he had found Lucile ready to return his love, and I so managed our conversation, that he never suspected any deception. Under this disguise, which flattered his deluded imagination, I told him that I loved him; but that, knowing my father had somebody else in

view for me, I was obliged to feign compliance with his wishes; that therefore we should have to keep our love secret, and only let the night be a witness to it; that all private conversation must be avoided by us during the day, in order to give no cause for suspicion; that he would see me as cold in his presence as before we had this talk together; and that on his part, as well as on mine, nothing should be hinted at by gesture, word, or writing. In short, without dwelling upon all the trouble I took to bring this deception safely to an end, I succeeded so well at last, that I secured a husband for myself.

FROS. Ho! ho! what hidden talents you have suddenly developed! Who would have guessed it from your passionless look? But all the same, you have been very hasty; for granting that the thing has hitherto succeeded according to your wishes, what do you think will be the end of it; for of course it must come out sooner or later?

ASC. Ah! when love is strong, it overcomes all obstacles. Its only desire is to satisfy its yearnings. And provided it reaches the long wished-for goal, everything else is a mere trifle. But to-day I have opened my heart to you, so that your advice . . . but here comes the husband of whom I have spoken.

SCENE II.—VALÈRE, ASCAGNE, FROSINE.

VAL. If you are talking together, and my presence interrupts your conversation, I will withdraw.

ASC. No, no; you may well interrupt it, since you were the subject of it.

VAL. You were talking about me?

ASC. Yes, about you.

VAL. And what could you say about me?

ASC. I was saying, that if I had been a woman, Valère would have found it but too easy to please me, and that if he had given me his heart, I should have been only too ready to give him mine in return.

VAL. It is easy for you to make grand protestations when there is such an obstacle in the way, but you would be finely caught, if by some wonderful accident these protestations were put to the test.

ASC. Not a bit of it: I repeat that if only you loved me, I would willingly love you in return.

VAL. And what if you could contribute to my happiness by persuading another?

ASC. I fear I should do that with an ill grace.

VAL. What you say there is not very obliging.

ASC. What! supposing I were a woman, and loved you tenderly, could you be cruel enough, Valère, to ask me to engage myself to promote your passion for another? The task would be too painful for me.

VAL. But that not being the case

ASC. What I said to you, I said it as a woman, and so you ought to take it.

VAL. Then I must not hope for your good-will towards me, Ascagne, unless Heaven works in you a great miracle. In short, as you are not a woman, your affection is gone. There is nothing else that can make you interest yourself for me.

ASC. I am far more scrupulous than you can imagine; and the least hesitation is enough to offend me in a matter of love. But I am sincere, Valère, and will not, at all events, promise to help you unless you assure me absolutely that the feelings I have for you, you on your part have for me; that your friendship is as real, and that if I were a woman, you would love none other more than I love you.

VAL. I never before met with such a jealous scruple; but new as it is to me, I esteem your affection, and I promise you here all you ask of me.

ASC. Sincerely?

VAL. Sincerely.

ASC. Since it is so, in future I shall have no interest more at heart than yours.

VAL. I mean by-and-bye to tell you of an important secret, and I will then remind you of these words.

ASC. And I too have an important secret to disclose to you; your affection for me will then have occasion to show itself.

VAL. Indeed! What can that be?

ASC. The fact is, that I have given my heart, but I dare not reveal my love, and you may have power

enough over the object of my passion to secure my happiness.

VAL. Explain yourself, Ascagne, and be sure beforehand that your happiness is certain, if it is in my power to promote it.

ASC. You promise here more than you imagine.

VAL. No, no; tell me the name of the person over whom I am to use my influence.

ASC. Not yet; but it is a person nearly related to you.

VAL. You surprise me! Would to Heaven that my sister

ASC. This is not, I tell you, a proper time for me to explain myself.

VAL. But why?

ASC. For a certain reason: you shall know my secret when I know yours.

VAL. I cannot tell it to you without the consent of another.

ASC. Obtain it then; and after our mutual confidences, we will see who will best keep his word.

VAL. Farewell! I am satisfied.

ASC. I too am satisfied, Valère. (*Exit VALÈRE.*)

FROS. He thinks you will give him the help of a brother.

SCENE III.—LUCILE, MARINETTE, ASCAGNE, FROSINE.

LUC. (*to MAR.*) It is settled! Thus I can revenge myself! If that action at all pains him I shall be satisfied; my heart hopes for nothing else from it. (*to ASCAGNE*) You will find, my brother, a great change in me; after all the coldness I have showed to Valère, I have determined to love him, and towards him now tend all my wishes.

ASC. What do you say, sister? What! change so suddenly! This inconstancy seems to me very strange.

LUC. I have still more reason to be surprised at yours. Formerly Valère was, according to you, everything that one could wish for. It was on his account that you accused me of caprice, blind cruelty, pride, and injustice; and now that I want to return his love, my intention displeases you, and I find you ready to speak against his interests!

ASC. I quit his interests, sister, to embrace yours. I know now that he is attached to another, and you would expose yourself to shame if, when you would have him back, he refuses you.

LUC. If that is all your anxiety, I will now prove to you there is no cause for it. I know what I am to believe of his affection; it seems to me that he has shown me very clearly what he feels, so you may tell him what I have just told you; or, if you refuse, I myself will let him know that I accept him. Why! you seem thunderstruck at these words.

ASC. Ah! If I have any power over you, if you can be touched by a brother's entreaties, I beseech you to give up this idea, and not to take away Valère from a loving young creature whose interest is dear to me, and for whom, believe me, you ought to feel concerned. The poor unfortunate girl loves to desperation, and I am her only confidant. In her I perceive depths of tenderness enough to soften the proudest heart. Yes, you would pity the state of her mind, if you were aware of the blow with which you threaten her happiness; and I so well understand what will be the excess of her grief, that, believe me, you will kill her if you take from her the man she cherishes. Éraсте is a match that ought to satisfy you, and a mutual affection

LUC. Enough. I cannot understand for whom you plead with so much earnestness. But, pray, let us end this conversation here. Leave me to myself.

ASC. I go; but remember, cruel sister, that there is nothing left to me but despair, if you carry out your intended project.
(*Exeunt ASCAGNE and FROSINE.*)

SCENE IV.—LUCILE, MARINETTE.

MAR. You have taken a very sudden resolution.

LUC. Can the wounded heart think of anything but revenge? can it hesitate before what may serve its just anger? Ungrateful man! to treat me with such insolence!

MAR. You see that I am quite beside myself with it; I think and think and try to understand what it all means, but the thing is beyond me; I rack my brains in vain;

for; I must say, that never was any one more transported with joy than he, when he heard the good news; he would have deified me on the spot; and yet when I took that second message to him, never was a poor girl treated more shamefully. I cannot imagine what must have happened during that short time to cause such a change.

LUC. You need not trouble yourself about what happened, for I am determined that nothing will save him from my hatred. What! would you try to find anywhere but in his own baseness an excuse for such an affront? Can that letter, which I so bitterly repent having sent him, offer the smallest excuse for such mad behaviour?

MAR. Yes, I feel that you are right, and that this quarrel is downright treachery. We have both been taken in. And, after that, let us again listen to those unfeeling rascals who utter soft speeches, and who, to catch us, feign such tender love; yes, let us yield to their fine words, and give ourselves up to their prayers, weak women that we are! Out upon our folly! Plague on all men! I say.

LUC. Well! well! let him boast and laugh at us, he shall not laugh long, and I will let him see that in a noble heart, contempt follows close on slighted love.

MAR. At least, in such a case, it is a comfort to know that they have not got us in their power. Marinette was no such fool as to allow anything on a certain night when people were in a joking humour. Another in hopes of matrimony, might have yielded to the temptation; but *nescio vos*, quoth I.

LUC. How absurdly you talk, and how badly you choose your time for an outburst of this kind! The fact is that my heart is full of grief; and if ever that perfidious lover should by good fortune (although I fear I am wrong even to hope to be revenged on him, when Heaven seems to take such pleasure in afflicting me), if ever, I say, propitious fate were to bring him to my feet to beg forgiveness for his shameful conduct of to-day, and offer me his life as a sacrifice, I forbid you to plead for him. On the contrary I would have your fidelity show itself by reminding me of the enormity of his crime, and even if my heart should be tempted to lower itself to any condescension whatever for his sake, let your affection

show itself in severity, and not suffer my anger to subside.

MAR. Do not fear; leave that to me; I am at least as angry as you are, and I had rather die an old maid, than to see my fat traitor make me wish for him again. If he comes

SCENE V.—ALBERT, LUCILE, MARINETTE.

ALB. Go in, Lucile, and tell Mr. Métaphraste to come to me; I want to speak to him, and try to find out, since he is Ascagne's master, if he knows the cause of my son having been so gloomy of late.

SCENE VI.—ALBERT (*alone*).

What an abyss of cares and perplexities does an unjust action open before our feet! What have I not suffered since, prompted by love of money, I made a stranger pass for my dead son! When I contemplate the anxieties and troubles I have brought upon myself, I wish I had never thought of it. Sometimes I dread to hear of the deception being found out, and to see my family plunged into shame and misery. Sometimes I fear, for that son I must not lose, a thousand accidents that may happen at any time. If any business calls me out, I imagine that the first thing that will greet me on my return will be: "Alas! do you not know? Have you not been told? your son is ill with a fever. Or he has broken his leg, or his arm;" in short, no matter what I do, at every moment, all kind of apprehensions and forebodings come into my head. Ah!

SCENE VII.—ALBERT, MÉTAPHRASTE.

META. *Mandatum tuum curo diligenter.*

ALB. Master, I wish to

META. Master is derived from *magister*; it is as if you said *three times greater*.

ALB. May I die if I knew this. But let it be. Master, then

META. Proceed.

ALB. I will proceed, but do not you proceed to interrupt me thus. Well then, master, (mark this is the third time!) my son causes me some anxiety; you know that I love him dearly, and that I have always carefully brought him up.

META. It is true: *Filio non potest praeferri nisi filius.*

ALB. Master, when we speak together I think this jargon altogether unnecessary; I believe you are a great Latin scholar and an eminent doctor; for this I rely on those who have told me so, but in the conversation which I want to have with you, pray do not make a display of all your learning; do not play the pedagogue and splutter out hundreds of learned words, as if you were holding forth in a pulpit. My father was a very clear-headed man, but he never taught me anything but my prayers, and though I have said them daily now these fifty years, they are still double Dutch to me. Therefore leave at rest your knowledge, and adapt your language to my weaker understanding.

META. Be it so.

ALB. To come to my son then. He seems to me to have set his heart against matrimony and whatever match I propose to him, he is cold and indifferent, and rejects my offer.

META. Perhaps he is of the temper of the brother of Marcus Tullius, who discoursed about it to Atticus; and as the Greeks also say that: "*Athananon* . . ."

ALB. For Heaven's sake, you irrepressible pedagogue, leave in peace the Greeks, the Albanians, the Slavonians, and all the other nations you want to talk about. What can my son have to do with them?

META. Very well, then, your son . . . ?

ALB. I often wonder if some secret love does not burn within him. For certainly there is something on his mind; and, unnoticed by him, I saw him yesterday, alone in a part of the wood where nobody ever goes.

META. In the remote part of the wood, do you mean to say? a solitary spot, in Latin, *secessus*; Virgil says, *est in secessu locus* . . .

ALB. How could that Virgil say such a thing, since I am perfectly sure that in that retired spot, there was not a soul except us two.

META. I quote Virgil merely as the famous author of a more chosen term than the word you used ; not as a witness of what you saw yesterday.

ALB. And I tell you that I neither want a more chosen term, author, or witness, and that my own testimony is sufficient.

META. Yet we ought to choose the words which are used by the best authors. *Tu vivendo bonos, scribendo sequere peritos*, as the saying is.

ALB. Man or devil, will you listen to me without disputing?

META. That is Quintilian's rule.

ALB. Plague take the babbler!

META. And he says besides, on the same subject, a very learned thing which you would most assuredly be glad to hear.

ALB. I would rather be the devil and carry you off, you insufferable ass! How sorely I feel tempted to shut up that jaw of yours with a sound application.

META. Sir, what may be the cause of your being so angry with me? What do you want of me?

ALB. I want to be listened to when I speak ; I have told you so twenty times over.

META. Oh! undoubtedly, if that is all, you will soon be satisfied ; I am silent.

ALB. You do well.

META. I am ready to hear what you have to say.

ALB. It is but right you should.

META. May I expire if I say another word.

ALB. Heaven grant you that favour.

META. Henceforth you shall not accuse me of talkativeness.

ALB. Be it so.

META. Speak whenever you please.

ALB. I will begin

META. And do not be afraid of any more interruption from me.

ALB. That will do.

META. I am more likely than another to keep my promise.

ALB. I believe so.

META. And as I promise to say nothing

ALB. It is sufficient.

META. Henceforth I am dumb.

ALB. Very well.

META. Now speak, take courage, I am here to hear you ; you will not complain that I cannot be silent, I will not so much as open my mouth.

ALB. (*aside*). The brute !

META. But, pray do not be long over it. I have been listening to you a long time now ; it is but right I should speak in my turn.

ALB. Then, detestable bore

META. But, I say, do you mean me to listen for ever. Let us at least share the talk or I shall leave you.

ALB. My patience is really

META. What ! you still go on ; you have not done ? By Jove, I am beyond myself !

ALB. I have not spoken a

META. Again ? Good Heavens ! what lengthy discourse ! Can nothing stop the torrent ?

ALB. This is more than flesh and blood can bear.

META. At it again ! O what torture ! Pray let me speak ; do you not know that a fool that says nothing, can in no way be distinguished from a wise man who holds his tongue.

ALB. S'dearth ! I will make you hold yours. (*Exit.*)

SCENE VIII.—MÉTAPHRASTE (*alone*).

That saying of a philosopher comes in very opportunely : "Speak, in order to be known." I had rather, therefore, lose my humanity and exchange my essence for that of the brute than be deprived of the liberty of speaking.—What a headache I shall have for a whole week ! And, oh ! how I hate those eternal talkers ! But, what ! if the learned men are not to be heard, if their mouth must be closed, then the order of things must be reversed : soon we shall see chickens devour the fox, young children teach old men, lambs take pleasure in pursuing a wolf, fools make laws, women fight, judges tried by criminals, and masters

whipped by pupils, we shall see the sick prescribe for the healthy, the timorous hare

SCENE IX.—ALBERT, MÉTAPHRASTE.

(ALBERT rings a large bell in the ears of MÉTAPHRASTE, and drives him off.)

META. Mercy! for pity's sake! help! help!

ACT III.

SCENE I.—MASCARILLE (*alone*).

Heaven sometimes favours a rash enterprise, and we must get out of a scrape as well as we can. As for me, entrapped as I have been into saying too much, the quickest remedy I could think of, was to go straight to our old master Polidore and disclose the whole affair to him. His son is a hare-brained fellow who worries my life out of me, and if, devil take it, he learns from the other what I have done, won't he just take the dust out of my doublet. However, before he can vent his fury upon me, something lucky may turn up; the two old men may come to an understanding. So I shall go without loss of time to find Albert according to the order of my old master.

SCENE II.—ALBERT, MASCARILLE.

ALB. Who knocks?

MASC. A friend.

ALB. Hallo, Mascarille! what brings you hither?

MASC. I come, sir, to wish you good morning.

ALB. Oh! indeed! you give yourself a great deal of trouble. Good morning, with all my heart. (*Goes in.*)

MASC. Short and sweet! what a rough old fellow it is! (*Knocks.*)

ALB. You, again?

MASC. You have not heard me, sir.

ALB. Did you not wish me good morning?

MASC. Yes.

ALB. Very well, good morning, I say.

MASC. Yes, but I come also to present Signor Polidore's compliments to you.

ALB. Ah, that's another thing. Your master sends his compliments?

MASC. Yes.

ALB. I am much obliged to him, go and tell him that I wish him every happiness. *(Goes in.)*

MASC. This man is an enemy to all ceremony.

(Knocks again.)

But, sir, I have not finished the message he wished me to deliver; he has an urgent request to make of you.

ALB. I am at his service at any moment *(about to go)*.

MASC. Stop, two words more, and I have done: he wishes for a moment's interview with you concerning an important matter, and intends himself to come here about it.

ALB. And what may be this important affair about which he wishes to speak to me?

MASC. A great secret, which he has only just this moment found out, and which no doubt greatly concerns you both. That is my message. *(Exit.)*

SCENE III.—ALBERT.

Just Heavens! fear and trembling seize upon me! We generally see very little of each other. The storm is now about to burst over my head and to overthrow all my schemes? For this secret can only be the one secret I fear to see revealed! The hope of gain must have made some one unfaithful to me; and now there is an eternal stain upon my honour. My deception is found out! How difficult it is to conceal truth for any length of time! How much better it would have been for me and for my reputation had I obeyed the warnings of my conscience, which prompted me to restore, of my own accord, the wealth I withhold from Polidore! How much better if I had listened to the fear which told me to settle the affair quietly between us, in order to avoid the public shame to which I am now exposed. But, alas! it is too

late, the opportunity is gone for ever; and this wealth which came into my family by fraud, will not go out of it without carrying the best part of mine away with it.

SCENE IV.—ALBERT, POLIDORE.

POL. (*not seeing ALBERT*). To be thus married without anybody knowing anything about it! How will it all end? I don't know what to think of it, and I greatly fear both the wealth and the just anger of the father.—But there he is alone.

ALB. (*aside*). Polidore! Oh Heavens!

POL. (*aside*). I dread to address him.

ALB. (*aside*). Fear keeps me back.

POL. (*aside*). How am I to begin?

ALB. (*aside*). What shall I say?

POL. (*aside*). He seems greatly agitated.

ALB. (*aside*). He changes colour.

POL. I see by your looks, Signor Albert, that you already know what brings me here.

ALB. Alas, yes!

POL. Well may you look surprised at the news! I could hardly believe what I was just now told.

ALB. I ought to blush with shame and confusion.

POL. I certainly think that such an action is greatly to be blamed, and I have no wish to excuse the guilty.

ALB. Heaven is merciful to miserable sinners.

POL. It is for you to consider this.

ALB. We should behave like Christians.

POL. Yes, that is most certain.

ALB. Have mercy, for Heaven's sake, have mercy, Signor Polidore!

POL. It is I, who now implore mercy of you.

ALB. On my bended knees I ask it. (*Kneels.*)

POL. Such an attitude should be mine rather than yours. (*Kneels.*)

ALB. Have pity on my misfortune.

POL. After such an outrage I am the suppliant.

ALB. Your great goodness overwhelms me.

POL. You confound me with such humility.

ALB. Once more; forgive me!

POL. Alas! It is I who beg for pardon.

ALB. I am deeply grieved for this action.

POL. Not more deeply grieved than I.

ALB. Dare I entreat you not to make it public?

POL. Alas! Albert, I have no other wish.

ALB. Preserve my honour.

POL. I am very anxious to do so.

ALB. As to the money, you yourself will decide how much you must have.

POL. I desire no more than you are willing to give: you will decide entirely the money question, and I shall be only too thankful if you are satisfied.

ALB. What a god-like man! what gentle goodness!

POL. Rather, what wonderful kindness in you after such a misfortune.

ALB. May you be prosperous in all things!

POL. May Heaven keep you!

ALB. Let us embrace like brothers.

POL. With all my heart; I am delighted to see everything ended so happily.

ALB. May Heaven be thanked for it!

(They rise from their knees.)

POL. I want to be true with you; I greatly feared your resentment when you heard that Lucile had committed herself with my son, and as you are wealthy and have many friends

ALB. Eh? what are you saying about Lucile?

POL. Let it rest. It is needless to say too much about it. I willingly own that my son is greatly to blame, and even if it can be an alleviation to your sorrow, I will grant that he is the only guilty one; your daughter's virtue is too real for her ever to have taken such a step, had it not been at the instigation of a wicked tempter; the villain has betrayed her innocent trust, and thus destroyed all the hopes you had fondly cherished for her. Yet, since the thing is done, and that according to my inmost wishes, we are both willing to be at peace and unity, let the past be forgotten, and let us at once remedy the evil by the solemnity of a public wedding.

ALB. *(aside)*. Heavens! what a mistake I have made! But what is this I hear? I escape one trouble only to

rush into another as great! I feel so terribly upset that I scarcely know how to answer. I hardly dare speak a single word for fear of betraying myself.

POL. What are you thinking of, Signor Albert?

ALB. Oh! nothing. Let us put off our conversation for awhile; I suddenly feel very unwell, and I must leave you. *(Exit.)*

SCENE V.—POLIDORE.

I quite understand the state of his feelings. However much he may be disposed to forgive, his vexation and regret have not altogether left him. The reality of the insult comes home to him, and he endeavours by leaving me, to hide what he suffers. I am grieved for him, and his sorrow touches me. Time will bring relief to his mind. Sorrow too suddenly repressed is apt to become tenfold. Here comes my foolish boy, the cause of all this trouble.

SCENE VI.—POLIDOR, VALÈRE.

POL. So, my fine fellow, you seem determined to trouble your old father's last moments. Every day brings some new folly of yours to light! Shall I have nothing else drummed into my ears?

VAL. What are the evil deeds of which I am guilty every day? And how have I deserved my father's anger?

POL. Oh! nothing at all! I must be a strange man and one easily put out, to go and find fault with so sweet and discreet a son! Look at him! he lives like a saint, always shut up at home at his prayers. You say he perverts the order of nature and turns night into day.—What an utter falsehood! That on twenty occasions he has shown no consideration whatever, either for father or kindred.—Detestable untruth! That only lately, he married secretly the daughter of Albert, regardless of all the consequences that may follow.—Surely you take him for another; the dear innocent does not even know what you mean.—What! you reprobate, born to me for the punishment of my sins, will you always follow the bent of your own inclination? Shall I never once see you act wisely before I die? *(Exit.)*

VALÈRE (*alone, and musing*). Where does that blow come from? I can think of nobody but Mascarille; but he is not a fellow to come and confess the truth to me. I will conquer my rage for a while, and will set a snare for him.

SCENE VII.—VALÈRE, MASCARILLE.

VAL. I say, Mascarille, my father knows all about our secret.

MASC. Knows all about our secret?

VAL. He does indeed.

MASC. How can he possibly have heard of it?

VAL. I really can't make out who could have told him; but it does not matter at all, and I have every reason to be delighted. He didn't say an unkind word to me about it; on the contrary, he excuses my fault, and approves of my love. I should give much to know who could have disposed his mind so well towards me. I cannot express to you what a comfort I find it.

MASC. And what would you say, sir, if I were the cause of your being so happy?

VAL. Nonsense, nonsense; you won't make me believe that?

MASC. It is I, myself, who told it to your father, and who brought about this comfortable state of things.

VAL. Is it so, really, without jesting?

MASC. Devil take me if I jest, and if it is not the perfect truth.

VAL. (*drawing his sword*). And let him take me if I do not make you pay for it!

MASC. Sir, what is it you mean? Give me time to think.

VAL. And this is the fidelity you promised me! Had I not deceived you, you would never have acknowledged what I suspected you instantly of having done. Wretch! who cannot keep a quiet tongue in your head, you have angered a father against me, and have utterly ruined me. You shall die for it on the spot.

MASC. Gently! My soul is not in a fit condition to die. I entreat you to wait and see the result of all this. I had good reasons for revealing a marriage which you could

never have succeeded in keeping secret. It was a masterly stroke, and you will see that the issue will condemn the fury you are in. What can you complain of, as long as, through my exertions, all your wishes are fully satisfied, and you see an end to the constraint from which you are now suffering.

VAL. Yes, and if all those fine speeches of yours prove to be nothing but idle trash!

MASC. Then you will still be at liberty to kill me; but nothing of the kind will happen, for all my schemes will be successful. Heaven will help his own; and you, satisfied by the result, will then thank me for my rare management of your affairs.

VAL. We will see. But Lucile

MASC. Hush! here is her father.

SCENE VIII.—ALBERT, MASCARILLE; VALÈRE.

ALB. (*not seeing VALÈRE*). The more I recover from the trouble I gave way to at first, the more astounded I feel at this strange story, which, acting on my fears, has so dangerously misled me; for Lucile maintains that it is all nonsense, and she speaks in a tone that leaves me in no doubt of the truth of what she said. Ha! (*to VALÈRE*) sir, is it you whose consummate impudence dares thus to sport with my honour. Is it you who invented such a base story?

MASC. Gently, Signor Albert! moderate your passion; and use milder terms in speaking to your son-in-law.

ALB. How! son-in-law? Rascal! you look like the mainspring of these shameful tricks, and the author of the story.

MASC. I do not see why you should be in such a rage.

ALB. You think it fine, then, I suppose, to slander my daughter's character, and bring such shame upon a whole family?

MASC. He is quite ready to do your will in everything.

ALB. What do I want from him, but that he should tell nothing but the truth! If he felt any inclination for Lucile, he should have courted her properly and honourably; he

should have done what duty required, asked her father's consent, and not have recourse to a base story, offensive to all modesty.

MASC. What! Is not Lucile secretly married to my master?

ALB. No, scoundrel! and never will be.

MASC. Ah, indeed! But suppose that the thing is really done, will you approve of this secret union?

ALB. And suppose the thing is not really done, will you approve of a sound thrashing, that will break every bone in your body?

VAL. (*interrupting*). Sir, I can easily prove to you that he speaks the truth.

ALB. Good! now the other! a worthy master of such a man! The impudent liars!

MASC. Upon my word, as a man of honour, it is as I tell you.

VAL. What object have we in deceiving you?

ALB. (*aside*). They play into each other's hands like a couple of card-sharpers at a fair.

MASC. But the shortest and simplest way is to call Lucile, instead of standing here quarrelling; let her speak for herself.

ALB. And if she herself gives you the lie?

MASC. Sir, she cannot, you may be sure of that. Only promise to consent to their union, and I am willing to submit to the greatest punishment if she does not confess to you, with her own mouth, both her engagement to my master, and her love for him.

ALB. Very well, we shall see (*goes and knocks at her door*).

MASC. (*to VALÈRE*). Cheer up, all will be well.

ALB. Lucile, come here one moment.

VAL. (*to MASCARILLE*). I fear

MASC. Fear nothing.

SCENE IX.—LUCILE, ALBERT, VALÈRE, MASCARILLE.

MASC. Signor Albert, at least be silent.—At length, madam, everything conspires to make your happiness complete; your father, having been told of your love, leaves

you your husband, and agrees to your being united, provided that, banishing all frivolous fears, a word of your own mouth confirms our statement.

LUC. What story is this impudent villain retailing me now?

MASC. Nothing like a good start! Already a noble title wherewith to honour me!

LUC. Let us know a little, sir, what can have provoked this complimentary story, that is ere now in everybody's mouth.

VAL. Forgive me, my own precious one, my servant has been indiscreet, and much against my will, I see our marriage is known.

LUC. Our marriage?

VAL. Yes, everything has come to light, my dear Lucile; and it is no longer in our power to disguise the truth.

LUC. What! the ardour of my love has made you my husband?

VAL. It is a happiness which must cause me to be viewed with jealousy by all; but I attribute my success much less to the greatness of your passion, than to the kindness of your heart. I know that you have a right to be angry, for you wish it to be kept a secret. I did all in my power to check my transports of delight near you, in order to conform to your express commands, but

MASC. Well! yes, it was I. No such great harm done!

LUC. Never in my life have I heard such an impudent falsehood! What! do you dare to go on with it even in my presence, and do you think to obtain me by means of such a glaring imposture? The high-minded lover, who thinks of attacking my honour because he has failed to win my heart, and who wishes that my father, alarmed with such a tale, should force me to a marriage that covers me with shame! No! were everything to favour your love, my father, fate, my own heart, you would still see me struggle in my just indignation against fate, my father, and my own heart. I would sooner call death to my help than unite myself to a lover who has thought to obtain me through such vile means. There, go! if my sex did not

forbid my giving way to my just anger, I would show you what it is to treat me thus.

VAL. (to MASCARILLE). What can we do to soothe her; we are lost!

MASC. Let me speak to her.—Look here, madam, what is the use of all this comedy now? What are you thinking of? What strange whim makes you struggle so hard against the accomplishment of your own wishes? If your father were a harsh man, it would be different; but he allows himself to be convinced, and he has even assured me that if you will but confess frankly to him what has happened, you are sure to obtain everything from his affection. I daresay you experience some little shame to have to make a frank acknowledgment of the love that governs you, but, if it has not left you as free as it found you, a good marriage will soon put everything to rights; and whatever may be said against your love, there is still no insignificant margin between it and murder. One knows that the flesh is weak, and that a maiden is neither stock nor stone. It is certain that you were not the first, and I dare say that you will not be the last.

LUC. What, father! can you listen to this insolent talk and make no reply to these indignities?

ALB. What would you have me say? I feel quite beside myself with this affair.

MASC. Believe me, madam, you are wrong not to have already confessed everything.

LUC. Confessed what?

MASC. What? Why, what has taken place between my master and you.—A fine joke!

LUC. And what has taken place between your master and me, impudent rascal?

MASC. Well, it seems to me you ought to know better than I do, and that for you that evening was too pleasing a one for us to believe you have lost all remembrance of it.

LUC. Father, this is too much to bear from an insolent flunkey!

(*She gives him a box on the ear. Exit.*)

SCENE X.—ALBERT, VALÈRE, MASCARILLE.

MASC. I do believe she has given me a box on the ear.

ALB. Begone! rascal! villain! her father praises her for what she has done to you.

MASC. Notwithstanding all that, devil take me, if I say a word more or less than the simple truth.

ALB. Notwithstanding all that, if I allow you to carry on this impudence any further, may my ears be cropped.

MASC. Shall I bring you two witnesses to prove that what I say is true?

ALB. Shall I bring two of my servants to cudgel you?

MASC. Surely their testimony must make mine credible.

ALB. Surely their strength will make up for my weakness.

MASC. I tell you that it is bashfulness that makes Lucile act in that fashion.

ALB. I tell you that I will have you taken up for all this.

MASC. Do you know Ormin, that stout and clever notary?

ALB. Do you know Grimpant, the city hangman?

MASC. And Simon, who was once so fashionable a tailor?

ALB. And the gibbet set up in the middle of the market-place?

MASC. You will see this marriage confirmed by them.

ALB. You will see your destiny ended by them.

MASC. It was these they took for witnesses of their mutual engagement.

ALB. It'll be these two who will shortly be revenged on you.

MASC. And they saw them interchange their promise.

ALB. And they shall see you dance under a halter.

MASC. And for a token Lucile had a black veil on.

ALB. And for a token your face tells of your doom; you shall have a black cap.

MASC. O! obstinate old man!

ALB. O! cursed rascal! you may thank my age, which makes it impossible for me to punish you on the spot, for your insulting behaviour; but you shall lose nothing by delay, and you will receive it with interest, I promise you.

(Exit.)

SCENE XI.—VALÈRE, MASCARILLE.

VAL. Well! and the admirable result we were to see

MASC. I understand what you mean: everything is against me; I see cudgels and gibbets preparing for me on every side; therefore, the only way of being at peace is for me to cast myself headlong from some rock, if in the depth of my despair I can find one high enough to satisfy me. Farewell!

VAL. No, no; in vain you try to escape; if you die, I will have it done in my presence.

MASC. I cannot die when anybody is looking at me; so you would thus delay the time of my death.

VAL. Follow me, villain! my insulted love will soon show you this is no jesting matter. *(Exit.)*

MASC. Unhappy Mascarille! to what a sea of troubles you are exposed to-day through the sins of others!

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—ASCAGNE, FROSINE.

FROS. What an unfortunate mishap!

ASC. Ah! my dear Frosine, fate has decreed my utter ruin. Now things have got so far, they will never stop there. Both Lucile and Valère, astonished at the mysterious state of affairs, will some day try to solve the mystery, and all my plans will fall to the ground. For whether we suppose Albert to be acquainted with the stratagem, or to be deceived like everybody else, if ever all that concerns me is revealed, and all the wealth which has wrongfully passed into his hands is taken away from him, my presence will be equally hateful to him. The self-interest he feels once gone, his love for me will go too; and I shall be no more than a stranger to him. Then whatever my lover may think of my deception, will he care to acknowledge for his wife a girl without fortune and without family?

FROS. I think you reason very sensibly; but you should have thought of this sooner. How is it that all this was

hidden from you till now? Though you only find it out to-day, there was no need of being a sorceress to see from the beginning what was sure to be the end of your designs upon him. The action spoke for itself; and as soon as you told me what you had done, I foresaw all the consequences.

ASC. But what am I to do? my anxiety is beyond expression: put yourself in my place and advise me.

FROS. But if I put myself in your place, it will be for you to give me advice in this failure; for then I am in your place, you in mine. Advise me, Frosine: you see to what an extremity I am reduced; what remedy can we find; tell me, I beg of you?

ASC. Alas! how can you turn all this into ridicule! You show very little sympathy with my bitter grief, if you laugh at me when I am in such distress.

FROS. Ascagne, believe me, I feel deeply for you, and I would do anything to bring you out of trouble; but what, after all, can I do? Indeed, I see very little hope of making this affair serve your love.

ASC. If there is no hope, then I must die.

FROS. Nay! do not die; there is plenty of time left for that. Death is a remedy always at hand, and which should only be used when all others have failed.

ASC. No, no, Frosine; if I have not your kind advice to guide me through all the perplexities by which I am surrounded, I shall give myself up wholly to despair.

FROS. A thought has just occurred to me. I think I will go and see the . . . But there is Eraste coming, he might disturb us. We will talk of this as we go along. Come with me.

SCENE II.—ÉRASTE, GROS-RENÉ.

ERAST. Another rebuff?

GR-RE. Never was ambassador more summarily dismissed. Hardly had I mentioned to her that you desired a moment's conversation with her, than, drawing herself up as stiff as buckram, she answered, "Go, go, I tell you! I value your master as much as I do you! tell him to pack himself off!" After this fine speech, she turned her back upon me, and away she went. Marinette, too, her nose up

in the air, let this off at me, "Begone, you mean flunkey!" and left me standing there, just as her mistress had done. So that our common good luck affords little for us to be jealous over.

ERAST. How ungrateful of her to receive with so much haughtiness the speedy repentance of a loving heart so justly incensed. What! is the first outburst of a passion which has such reasons of thinking itself deceived, never to be forgiven? And I, burning with love, was I in that fatal moment to show nothing but indifference before my rival's happiness? Would not any one have acted as I did? Would any one have believed such an outrageous story less than I? Did I remain too long under the influence of my well-founded suspicions? I waited for no protestations on her part; and when others scarcely know yet what to believe, my poor impatient heart returns wholly to her, and worships her as before! Yet she understands me so little, that she fails to see in all this homage the depth of my love for her. Instead of reassuring my troubled soul, and providing me with arms against the wiles of my rival, she abandons me to all the torture of my jealousy, refuses everything from me, messages, letters, and will not even grant me an interview. Alas! I fear that a love thus easily destroyed by so small an offence must have had very little hold on her. Her vexation, so ready to have recourse to extreme rigour, shows but too plainly what she really feels for me in her heart, and what value I ought to set upon the caprices with which she flattered my love. Well, it is over; I will no longer feel myself under the sway of one who, I see, cares so little for me; and since it seems such a matter of indifference to her whether she keeps her lover or not, I will show her that I can act in the same way.

GR.-RE. And so will I. Let us both be angry, and number our love among our old sins. We must teach these wayward women how to behave, and make them feel that we have still some courage left. He who is willing to bear their contempt is sure to have enough of it. If only we had the good sense to let them feel the high value we set upon ourselves, women would not talk so big. How scornful they become through our weakness! May I be hanged, if we should not see them cling about our neck more than

we should like, if it were not for that obsequious submission with which most men now-a-days are always spoiling them.

ERAST. For my part, nothing galls me so much as contempt; I am determined to love somebody else, and to render back disdain for disdain.

GR.-RE. And I, I am determined to vex myself no more about a wife; I renounce the whole sex, and in truth I believe you would be much wiser if you did the same. For, look you, master, it is said, you know, that woman is an animal hard to make out, and naturally inclined to mischief; and as an animal is always an animal, and will never be anything but an animal, though its life lasted for a hundred thousand years, so, on the same principle, a woman is always a woman, and will never be but a woman as long as the world endures: wherefore a certain Greek author says, a woman's head is like a quicksand, for—pray listen to this powerful argument—as the head is the chief of the body, and as the body without a chief is worse than a beast, if the chief does not agree with the head, and if everything is not regulated by a pair of compasses, there arise certain confusions; the animal part endeavours to get the better of the rational; the one says “gee,” the other “whoo,”* one calls for something soft, the other for something hard; in short, everything goes anyhow. This is to show that here below, according to the interpretation thereof, the head of a woman is like a weather-cock on the top of a house, which turns with the slightest wind. That is why cousin Aristotle often compares her to the sea: whence it comes to pass that people say, that nothing in the world is so stable† as the waves; or, by comparison—for comparison makes us comprehend an argument distinctly, and we, learned folks, we love a comparison better than a similitude—by comparison then, sir, if you'll allow me, as we see that the sea, when a storm rises, begins to foam, the winds blow and rage, billows rise against billows,

* *L'un tire à dia, l'autre à hurhaut*: *Dia* equals *à gauche*, and *hurhaut* or *hue*, *à droite*. *Gee* and *whoo* do not correspond exactly.

† *Gros-René* gets rather confused in his eloquence; he means ‘unstable.’

making a tremendous hubbub; and the ship, in spite of the pilot, goes sometimes down to the cellar, sometimes up into the garret; so when a woman gets whims and fancies into her head, we behold a tempest in the form of a squall, which will competitate* by certain . . words . . and then . . certain wind, which by . . certain waves in . . a certain manner, like a sand-bank . . when . . in short, the devil himself is better than a woman.

ERAST. Very well argued.

GR.-RE. Pretty tolerable, thank goodness! But I see them coming this way, sir; stand firm; be sure you don't give way.

ERAST. Never fear.

GR.-RE. I am very much afraid that her eyes will rivet your chain again.

SCENE III.—LUCILE, ÉRASTE, MARINETTE, GROS-RENÉ.

MAR. I see him here still; but don't give in.

LUC. Do not think me so weak.

MAR. He is coming towards us.

ERAST. No, no; do not think, madam, that I am come again to speak to you of my love. It is all over; I am resolved to cure myself, for I know too well the little power I had over your heart. The anger kept up so long by you for the shadow of an offence, proves but too well your indifference for me, and I must show that, contempt, above all things, wounds a generous heart. I am forced to confess that I saw in you charms I had never met with elsewhere, and that the raptures I felt in my bonds would have made me accept them rather than a proffered sceptre. My love for you was deep; you were the idol of my soul, and I own, that perhaps after all, insulted though I am, I may still find it difficult to separate myself entirely from you; that, perhaps, notwithstanding the cure I am attempting, my heart will bleed a long time yet from the wound; and that, freed at last from a yoke which was very precious to me, I shall have to relinquish the hope of ever loving again. But what of it! Since your hatred disdains to accept a

* *Compétiter*, a word of Molière's invention; equals apparently *entrer en compétition avec*.

heart thus offered to you, let this be the last occasion on which I shall trouble you with my rejected love.

LUC. The favour to me would have been more complete, sir, had you omitted even this last occasion.

ERAST. You shall be satisfied, since you will have it so. I break off for ever all acquaintance with you. I had rather die than speak to you again.

LUC. You will greatly oblige me.

ERAST. No, no; do not be afraid that I shall not keep my word. If I am not strong enough to dismiss your image from my heart, yet will you never see me return to you again.

LUC. You would return in vain.

ERAST. I would rather a thousand times stab myself to the heart, than be so mean as to come near you after the disgraceful manner in which you have treated me.

LUC. Be it so. Let us therefore talk no more about it.

ERAST. No, let us talk no more about it! To cut short here all those superfluous words, and to give you a convincing proof that I wish now and for ever to break my chains, I will keep nothing that may remind me of what I must forget. Here is your portrait: the eye sees in it the many wonderful charms that you possess, but in it they fail to see the many monstrous defects which are also yours. It is an impostor I restore to you.

GR-RE. Well said.

LUC. And I to follow your example, I return to you this diamond you forced upon me.

MAR. That's right.

ERAST. Here's also a bracelet * of yours.

LUC. This agate which was made into a seal belongs to you.

ERAST. (*reads*). "Your love for me, you say, is very great, Eraste, and you would like to know what to think of mine. If I do not love Eraste as much as he loves me, at least I love to feel that he should so love me." "LUCILE." You gave me thus the assurance that you approved of my love; it was a deception, and this is the treatment it deserves.

(*Tears up the letter.*)

* Bracelets of hair were interchanged between lovers.

LUC. (*reads*). "What will be the end of my ardent love, and how long shall I suffer? I know not. But this I know, O bewitching beauty, that I shall ever love and cherish you."

"ERASTE."

This spoke to me of your lasting love; the hand and the letter were alike false. (*Tears up the letter.*)

GR.-RE. Go on.

ERAST. (*showing another letter*). This letter also is from you. That reason is enough, it shares the same fate.

MAR. (*to LUCILE*). Be firm.*

LUC. (*tearing another letter*). I should be sorry to spare a single one.

GR.-RE. (*to ERASTE*). Don't let her have the last word.

MAR. (*to LUCILE*). Hold firm to the end.

LUC. Well, then, here go the whole of them.

ERAST. Thank Heaven, this is the last. May I die if I do not keep my word!

LUC. May Heaven punish me if I do not abide by mine!

ERAST. Farewell then.

LUC. Farewell.

MAR. (*to LUCILE*). Nothing could be better.

GR.-RE. (*to ERASTE*). You've got the best of it.

MAR. (*to LUCILE*). Now let's get out of his sight.

GR.-RE. (*to ERASTE*). After such proofs of courage, come away.

MAR. (*to LUCILE*). What can you be waiting for?

GR.-RE. (*to ERASTE*). What else do you want?

ERAST. Ah! Lucile, Lucile, I know that some day you will regret a heart like mine.

LUC. Eraste, Eraste, a heart like yours can easily be replaced by another.

ERAST. No, no; in vain will you search everywhere; never, I assure you, will you find a heart so devoted to you. I do not say this in the expectation of softening you; I should be wrong to nourish such a hope; the deepest devotion has not been able to move you; you have wished to break with me, let me think no more of your love. Yet believe me that no other after me, whatever he may try to persuade you, will love you so tenderly as I have done.

LUC. Those who love do not treat the object of their affection in such a manner, neither do they judge so rashly.

ERAST. Those who love may be seized with jealousy when appearances favour that jealousy; but when they love truly they cannot bear to part with the object of their affection; and this you have done.

LUC. Pure jealousy is more respectful.

ERAST. One is more indulgent for an offence caused by excess of love.

LUC. No, Eraste, you never loved me truly.

ERAST. No, Lucile, you never loved me at all.

LUC. Oh! I do not think you care much for that; perhaps it would have been better for me if But never mind, let us leave off, I do not say all I think about it.

ERAST. Why?

LUC. It seems to me that, when we are to break off our acquaintance, it's no longer of any use.

ERAST. We part?

LUC. Yes. What! is it not settled?

ERAST. And you can speak of parting calmly?

LUC. Yes, as you do.

ERAST. As I do?

LUC. It is a weakness to let people see that we are grieved to lose them.

ERAST. But, cruel one, it was you who wished it.

LUC. I? Certainly not. It was all your doing.

ERAST. I? I thought I was giving you great pleasure.

LUC. No, you did it for your own satisfaction.

ERAST. But if my heart sigh for its former claim, if sorrowful as it is, it sues for forgiveness

LUC. No, no, do no such thing, my weakness is great, I should be afraid of too quickly granting you your request.

ERAST. Ah! you can never grant it too soon; nor can I too soon ask for it. Grant it; consent to love me again; so great, so ardent a love should not for your own sake be allowed to cease; grant me the forgiveness I ask of you!

LUC. Take me home.

SCENE IV.—MARINETTE, GROS-RENÉ.

MAR. Oh! the poor spirited creature!

GR-RE. Ha! what want of courage!

MAR. I blush for her.

GR-RE. I am bursting with rage. Don't you go and imagine that I shall do the same for you.

MAR. Don't you go and fancy that you'll find a dupe in me.

GR-RE. You only just come and try some of your soft purring on me!

MAR. You take me for somebody else; you hav'n't to deal with my foolish mistress. Just look at his fine snout; it's enough to make anyone fall in love with his dear carcass, isn't it? I fall in raptures with his ugly mug! I hunt after him! A girl like me in love with him! Don't he wish he may get it!

GR-RE. Ah! that's the way you go on, is it? Here without any more ado take back your paltry bow, with its lace at a ha'-penny a yard; it shall no longer have the honour of being in my cap.

MAR. And to show you how I despise you, there's your half-hundred of Paris pins, which you gave me yesterday with so much boasting.

GR-RE. Here take your knife too, a thing most rich and rare; it must have cost you about a penny three farthings when you made me a present of it.

MAR. Take back your scissors and the brass chain.

GR-RE. I forgot the piece of cheese you gave me the day before yesterday. Here take it with the rest. I wish I could give up the soup you made me eat, so as to have nothing belonging to you.

MAR. I have none of your letters with me now, but I will burn them to the very last.

GR-RE. And you know what I shall do with yours.

MAR. Take care you never come to ask for my love again.

GR-RE. (*picking up a straw*). To break off every hope of being reconciled, let us break this straw between us. A straw broken concludes an affair between people of honour. Cast none of your soft looks at me, I mean to be angry!

MAR. Don't you be ogling me, I am far too nettled for that.

GR-RE. Here, break! then we shall never retract, Break I say!—Why you are laughing, you hussy!

MAR. It's you make me laugh.

GR-RE. Plague take your laughing. There is all my anger appeased again. What do you say to it? shall we break or shall we not break?

MAR. As you please.

GR-RE. As you please.

MAR. Nay, it shall be as you please.

GR-RE. Do you really wish me never to love you?

MAR. I? As you please.

GR-RE. I will do what you please.

MAR. I shall tell you nothing.

GR-RE. Neither shall I.

MAR. Nor I.

GR-RE. There, there! We had better give over this grimacing; shake hands; I forgive you.

MAR. And I forgive you.

GR-RE. Heigh ho! how bewitched I am with her charms!

MAR. What a soft fool Marinette is near her Gros-René!

ACT V.

SCENE I.—MASCARILLE (*alone*).

Quoth my master: "As soon as darkness has spread over the town I will slip into Lucile's house; go quickly, therefore, and get ready for this evening the dark-lantern and the necessary arms." When he said these words to me I seemed to hear: "Go quickly and fetch a halter to hang yourself." Come now, come, my master, let us reason together quietly, without noise, for at first your order threw me into such a state of astonishment that I could not find time to answer you; but I will speak to you now, and may your conviction be the result. "You wish, you say, to go and visit Lucile to-night?" "Yes, Mascarille." "And what do you intend to do?" "I wish to do what any other lover who wishes to be satisfied would do." "You wish to do what a man with little brains would do; you wish to go and risk your bones when there is no need."

"But you know why I am anxious to see her, you know that she is angry." "So much the worse for her." "But love prompts me to go and pacify her." "But love is a fool who does not know what he says. Will this love, pray, save us from an enraged rival, or father or brother?" "Do you think then that they mean to harm us?" "Yes, indeed, I do think so; and above all I fear that rival of yours." "But we will go well armed and trust to that, and if anybody tries to interfere with us, we will fight." "Just so! But do you know, my master, that this is the very thing your servant will not do! I measure swords! good Heavens! Am I a Roland or a Ferragus?*" You must know very little of me. When I, who am so dear to myself, consider that two inches of cold steel in the body is quite sufficient to send a poor mortal to his grave, I look at the whole affair with abhorrence." "But you will be armed from head to foot." "So much the worse for me, I shall be less able to get under cover: and besides, no armour can be so well adjusted but that some villanous sword point may slip between the joints." "So you'll let yourself be called coward?" "Coward as much as you please, provided I can still move my jaws, it matters little to me. At table you may set me down for as good as four people, but when fighting is the affair in hand, please count me for nothing. In short, if the other world has any charms for you the air of this one is very pleasant to me. I thirst neither for wounds nor death, and you will play the fool all by yourself, I assure you."

SCENE II.—VALÈRE, MASCARILLE.

VAL. I never yet passed such a tedious day. The sun seems to have forgotten himself in the heavens; he has such a long course yet to run before he reaches his setting-place that I do believe he will never accomplish the journey. His slow motion will drive me mad.

MASC. Why this hurry to go in the dark, and grope about for some ugly accident! You see that Lucile is obstinate in her refusal, and . . .

* Two characters in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*.

VAL. Do not trouble me with your idle talk. Were I sure to meet a hundred deadly ambuscades, I would still go and try to appease her anger which tortures my very soul—or end my existence. My mind is made up.

MASC. I approve your decision; but it is unfortunate, sir, that we should have to get in unperceived.

VAL. Well, yes.

MASC. And I am afraid I shall do mischief.

VAL. How so?

MASC. I am tormented to death with a violent cough, the noise of which may cause you to be discovered (*he coughs*) at any moment. You see how serious it is.

VAL. It will pass off; take some liquorice.

MASC. No, sir, I don't think it will pass off, sir. I should be truly delighted to accompany you, but I could never comfort myself if I were the cause of some misfortune befalling my dear master.

SCENE III.—VALÈRE, LA RAPIÈRE, MASCARILLE.

RAP. Sir, I have just been told on good authority that Eraste is greatly enraged against you, and that Albert, on account of his daughter, likewise means to break every bone in the body of that Mascarille of yours.

MASC. I! I am in no way concerned in all that has taken place. What have I done to have all my bones broken? Am I the keeper, then, of the virginity of all the girls in the town, that I should be threatened thus? Have I any power over temptation; and what can I do, I, poor wretch, if their heart prompts them?

VAL. Oh! they will not be so dangerous as they pretend; and however bold love may make Eraste, he will not ride over us so easily as he thinks.

RAP. If you should have need of my help, I am entirely at your service, you know of old that I am a staunch blade.

VAL. I am obliged to you, sir.

RAP. I have moreover two friends I can bring you, who will draw against all comers, and on whom you can depend.

MASC. Better accept them, sir.

VAL. You are too kind.

RAP. Little Gille might have also assisted us were it not for the sad accident that overtook him. Ah! sir, what a pity! Such a useful fellow as he was. You know the trick justice played him? He died like a Cæsar, and when the executioner broke him on the wheel he never uttered a word.

VAL. Such a man as that is a great loss; as for your escort, accept my best thanks, sir.

RAP. Do as you please; but remember that he is looking out for you, and that you may meet with but rough treatment.

VAL. Well, to show you how little I fear him, if he is looking out for me, I will go and offer to him what he is looking for; I will immediately go all over the town accompanied only by this one servant. (*Exit LA RAPIÈRE.*)

SCENE IV.—VALÈRE, MASCARILLE.

MASC. What, sir? will you tempt Heaven? What presumption is this! Alas! you see how we are both threatened; how from every side

VAL. What are you looking at there?

MASC. I smell a cudgel in that direction. Trust my prudence, and believe me, do not let us be obstinate and stop here alone in the street, but rather let us go in and shut ourselves up.

VAL. Shut ourselves up! You dare, you rascal, to propose such a cowardly action to me? Not a word more; make up your mind to follow me.

MASC. Ah! sir, my dear master, life is so sweet! We die only once, and it is for such a long time!

VAL. I'll beat you to a jelly if you say another word. Ascagne is coming this way, we must wait and see what he means to do; in the meantime come with me into the house to take whatever we want to enter the lists. (*Exit.*)

MASC. (*alone*). Lists indeed: as if I listed anything but peace and quiet. Plague take love and the girls too! The hypocrites, they are ready enough at first; but bless your heart, afterwards they look as demure as you please. (*Exit.*)

SCENE V.—ASCAGNE, FROSINE.

ASC. Is it really true, or do I dream? Pray tell me all that happened, from beginning to end.

FROS. You will know all the particulars well enough by and by. Do not be afraid! When anything extraordinary happens, people are only too pleased to talk and talk for ever about it. Let it be sufficient for you to know what most concerns you. You remember that the will could only be valid in the case of a male child being born to Albert; unfortunately, however, Albert's wife gave birth to a daughter—to you, in fact. But Albert had already thought of such a mishap happening, and had long decided upon the course he would follow in such a case; he, therefore, at once adopted for his child the son of Inez the flower-woman. The latter sent you to my mother to nurse, as if you had been her own child. Thus everything seemed comfortably settled, but when the little boy was about ten months old, he died. Albert was away at the time, and his wife, prompted by the fear of her husband's vexation, and also by maternal love, had recourse to a new scheme. She secretly took you back, and so you resumed your own place in your family. Albert was told that it was his daughter who had died, and not the boy who had taken your place. Thus much is now known about your birth, which your pretended mother kept secret till to-day. She gives her reasons for it, but she may have others in which her interests are not altogether yours. In short, this visit, from which I expected so little, has proved of the greatest importance to you. Inez giving you up, and your adventure with Valère making it urgent that the whole secret should be disclosed, we both went to your father and told him everything. A letter written by his wife corroborated all our statements. Pushing our point yet farther, and being rather successful in our endeavours from the first, we so well adjusted the interests of Albert and Polidore, to whom we proceeded at once on leaving Albert, we so very gently unfolded to the latter the whole mystery, in order not to make things appear too bad, and, in short, step by step, led his mind so prudently to a complete revelation, that we succeeded in making Polidore as anxious

as your father, to sanction the union on which depends all your happiness.

ASC. Ah! Frosine, what joy I foresee! . . . and all through your kind care.

FROS. Moreover, the good man seems inclined for a joke, and he has forbidden us as yet to say anything to his son.

SCENE VI.—POLIDORE, ASCAGNE, FROSINE.

POL. Come near, my daughter, since I can so name you, for I know the secret hidden under this disguise. You have done a bold action, but in carrying it out you have shown so much ingenuity and shrewdness that I forgive you, and I think my son will be happy when he knows whom it is he loves. He cannot value you too highly, and it is I who maintain it. But here he is, let us have some fun out of it; go and bring your people quickly.

ASC. Obedience, sir, shall be the first mark of respect I pay you. *(Exit.)*

SCENE VII.—POLIDORE, VALÈRE, MASCARILLE.

MASC. *(to VALÈRE)*. Misfortunes are often revealed by Heaven; I dreamt last night of pearls unstrung and of broken eggs, sir; this dream makes me quite low-spirited.

VAL. Poltroon!

POL. Valère, an encounter is awaiting you in which all your valour will be necessary. You will have to stand out against a powerful adversary.

MASC. And will no one stir a step to prevent them from cutting each other's throat? Well, let it be so, but remember that if some fatal accident deprives you of your son, you cannot call me to account for it.

POL. No, no, in this case I am the first to urge him not to fail in his duty.

MASC. Unnatural father!

VAL. I reverence you for that thought, father; it comes from a feeling heart. I know that I have offended you; I am to blame for having done all this without your consent, but however displeased you may be with me, I

see that nature always prevails, and that you do not wish me to feel terrified by Éraсте's threats.

POL. It is true that I was told to fear his anger towards you, but since then, things have altogether changed; you will be attacked by a more powerful enemy from whom you cannot flee.

MASC. Is there no agreement possible?

VAL. I flee! Heaven forbid! but who can this enemy be?

POL. Ascagne.

VAL. Ascagne?

POL. Yes, you will soon see him.

VAL. He, who showed himself so anxious to pledge his word to serve me!

POL. Yes, it is he who says that he has something against you, and who in the field, where honour calls you, is resolved to decide the quarrel by single combat.

MASC. He is a worthy gentleman; he knows that generous hearts do not expose other people's lives for their own quarrels.*

POL. In short, they accuse you of imposture, and their resentment seemed so natural to me, that Albert and I have agreed that you should give Ascagne full satisfaction for the wrong you have done; but publicly, without any delay, and according to the formalities usual on such occasions.

VAL. And has Lucile, father, obstinately . . .

POL. Lucile marries Éraсте, and she too condemns you; and, in order to prove your story to be false, she is resolved to have you for a witness of her marriage.

VAL. Ha! such wicked boldness is enough to drive one to desperation. What! has she lost all sense, faith, conscience, and honour?

SCENE VIII.—ALBERT, POLIDORE, LUCILE, ÉRASTE, VALÈRE, MASCARILLE.

ALB. Well! and the combatants? Ours is coming; have you summoned up that courage of yours?

VAL. Yes, yes; you need not fear, I am ready, since you all are determined I should fight. If I have hesitated, it was through a feeling of delicacy, and not because of the valour of my opponent. But this is urging me beyond

* See 'Les Fâcheux,' Sc. x.

endurance; the respect I felt is at an end; I am now ready to go to any extremes. The perfidy, of which I am the object, is too surprising and too shameful for me not to revenge myself resolutely. (to LUCILE) Not because my love to you still exists; anger alone is the feeling that warms my breast, and when I have made your shame public, your guilty marriage will in no way disturb me. Your behaviour, Lucile, is odious; I can hardly trust my own eyes. You show yourself devoid of all modesty, and you ought to die of mere shame.

LUC. Such hard words might distress me, were not my avenger at hand. There is Ascagne, who will soon, and without much trouble, make you adopt another tone.

SCENE IX.—ALBERT, POLIDORE, ASCAGNE, LUCILE, ÉRASTE, VALÈRE, FROSINE, MARINETTE, GROS-RENÉ, MASCARILLE.

VAL. Never! Were he to call twenty more arms to his help. I am grieved that he should have to expose his life for a guilty sister, but since, through his error, he challenges me, we will give him satisfaction—and to you also my valiant gentleman.

ÉRAST. Oh! I felt some interest in all this a short while ago, it is true, but now, as Ascagne has taken upon himself to settle everything, I will have nothing more to do with it, but leave it all to him.

VAL. You do well: it is always a wise thing to be prudent, but

ÉRAST. He will be sufficient in himself to give you satisfaction for us all.

VAL. He!

POL. Do not treat the matter lightly; you do not yet know what a strange young fellow Ascagne is.

ALB. As yet he is ignorant of it, but he will soon show him what he is.

VAL. Come on, then; let us see.

MAR. What! before everybody?

GR.-RE. It would not be proper.

VAL. Are you laughing at me? I will break the head of the first who laughs! Now, Ascagne

ASC. No, no, I am not so terrible as they all make out.

In this adventure, where I have to settle the interests of everyone, my weakness will be but too apparent. You will discover that Heaven, in whose power is our fate, did not give me a heart able to resist you, but that it reserved to you the easy conquest of Lucile's brother. Yes, far from boasting of the power of his arm, Ascagne shall receive death from you; nay, will gladly die if his death can contribute to your satisfaction, by giving you, in the presence of everyone here, a wife who cannot lawfully belong to any one but you.

VAL. No! the whole world, after her perfidy and shameless conduct

ASC. Ah! Valère, suffer me to tell you that the heart of her who is engaged to you can be accused of no crime towards you; her love is still pure, and her constancy unshaken. I take your own father as witness.

POL. Yes, my son, we have laughed too long at your anger, and I feel it is time that you should be undeceived. She to whom you are bound is here before your eyes, concealed under this dress. From her earliest years a question of property hid her under this disguise; everybody was deceived. A short time since, however, love made her adopt a new disguise. She deceived you, but of our two families she made one. Do not look so scared, I am now telling you the truth; yes, look at her, it is she who, with subtle skill, managed to receive your vows under the name of Lucile, and who by so doing, perplexed us all. But since Ascagne here gives place to Dorothée, it is our duty to see your love freed from all mystery, and a public ceremony strengthen the bonds of your secret marriage.

ALB. And this is the single combat, forbidden by no law, to which you were called in order to give us all satisfaction for your offence.

POL. Such an event may well surprise you, but it is in vain now to hesitate.

VAL. No, I do not hesitate; this adventure truly astonishes me; still it is also a pleasant surprise, and I find myself seized with admiration, love, and delight. Is it possible that those eyes

ALB. This dress, dear Valère, scarcely suits all the tender speeches you would make. Let her go and change

it; and, in the meantime, you shall have all the details of the adventure.

VAL. You, Lucile, pray forgive me; if my mind deceived

LUC. Oh! it is an offence easy to forgive.

ALB. Let us go; we can say all that at home, and we shall have leisure to congratulate one another.

ERAST. Gently, you forget that we still have here cause for slaughter. Our happiness is indeed complete, but who is to have Marinette, Mascarille or Gros-René? This affair must be decided by blood.

MASC. Nay, nay; my blood suits my body too well. Let him marry her in peace, it is just the same to me; I know Marinette pretty well; marriage with her will not shut the door against courtship.

MAR. And do you think I shall take you for a lover? It is all very well for a husband; we take him as we find him, and do not stand too much upon ceremony, but a lover should have more to recommend him.

GR.-RE. Listen, Marinette, when marriage has made us of one flesh, I must insist upon your turning a deaf ear . . .

MASC. Do you think, brother, that in marrying her you will have her all to yourself?

GR.-RE. Decidedly. I will have a virtuous wife, or else I shall make a fine shindy.

MASC. Pooh! pooh! you will do as others have done; you will soften down. Those who before marriage show themselves so particular and so severe, often degenerate into pacific husbands.

MAR. Never mind what he says, my dear little husband; fear nothing about my fidelity; soft speeches will have no effect upon me; I will tell you everything.

MASC. Oh, the cunning wench! to make her husband a confidant!

MAR. Be silent! viper's tongue! *

ALB. Now, for the third time, I say let us go home, and continue at leisure such pleasant talk.

* *As de pique* (ace of spades) means now *mauvaise langue*, but it is open to question whether Marinette meant thus much by it. Compare act iv. sc. ii., where she calls Gros-René *un beau valet de carreau* (a fine knave of diamonds).

THE AFFECTED LADIES.

(LES PRÉCIEUSES * RIDICULES.)

* There is no equivalent in English for the word "*Précieuse*." The nearest approach to a faithful rendering would perhaps be "The Ridiculous Euphuists;" but such a title is too formidable a one to be ventured upon. Any title bearing on affectation only, falls short of the full meaning of the word. See p. 153.



PREFACE OF THE AUTHOR.

It is a strange thing that people should be put in print against their will. I know of nothing so unjust, and I could forgive any other violence more easily.

Not that I intend here to play the bashful author and depreciate my own comedy out of delicacy. I should inconsistently offend all Paris if I accused it of having applauded a senseless thing; for as the public is the supreme judge of all these kinds of works, it would be impertinence in me to question its judgment; and had I entertained the worst opinion in the world of my comedy before it was acted, I am now bound to believe it to be worth something, since so many people have agreed to speak in its favour. But as much of the pleasure it gave depends on the action and intonation of the voice, it was of great importance to me that it should not be shorn of these ornaments; and I thought the success on the stage satisfactory enough not to look any farther. I intended, in fact, to show it only by candle-light, for fear I should otherwise have reminded some one of the proverb; and I had no wish to see them take a leap from the *Théâtre de Bourbon* into the *Galerie du Palais*.^{*} Yet I was unable to avoid it, and I have the mortification of seeing a pilfered copy of my play in the hands of the booksellers, together with a privilege obtained by unfair means. In

^{*} The publisher, G. de Luynes, who sold the first edition of 'Les Précieuses Ridicules,' lived in the *Galerie du Palais*.

vain I cried "O Times! O Manners!" the necessity for me to be in print or to have a lawsuit was shown to me; the last evil is even worse than the first. I must submit to fate, and give my consent to a thing which would certainly be done whether I gave it or not. Good heavens! in what an unwonted perplexity an author is when he brings out a book, and how strange he feels the first time he appears in print! If only they had forewarned me I should have looked to myself, I should have taken all the precautions which authors, now my brethren, are wont to take in like circumstances. I should, in spite of himself, have chosen some great lord for the patron of my work, and should have tried to excite his liberality with a dedicatory epistle in high-flown style; I should, moreover, have endeavoured to write a fine and scholarly preface; for I do not lack books which would have supplied me with all that can be said or learnt on Tragedy or Comedy, the etymology of both, their origin, their definition, and so forth. I should also have spoken to my friends, who, for the commendation of my play, would not have refused me verses in French or in Latin. I even have some who would willingly have praised me in Greek, and no one is ignorant of the marvellous efficacy of an eulogium in Greek at the beginning of a book. But I am sent into the world without any notice, I hardly know where I am, and I have not even the liberty of saying a few words to justify my intentions as to the subject of this comedy. I should have liked to have shown that throughout it keeps within the bounds of fair and honest satire; that the most excellent things are liable to be caricatured by wretched asses who deserve to be whipped; and that these ridiculous imitations of what is most perfect have been at all times the subject of comedy. And for the same reasons that the true scholar and the truly brave have never as yet thought fit to be offended at the doctor or the swaggerer in a comedy,—no more than the judges, princes, or kings, to see Trivelin or any other upon the stage ridiculously mimic the judge, the prince, or the king—in the same manner the true "*Précieuses*" would be wrong to be vexed when I satirize those absurd people who wretchedly imitate them. But, as I have already said, they do not

leave me time to breathe, and Mr. de Luynes means to go and bind me up on the spot; let it be so, then, since Heaven will have it so!

Whatever he may say in his Preface, there is little doubt that in 'Les Précieuses Ridicules,' Molière attacked that celebrated coterie of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, composed of learned, or would be learned, ladies and gentlemen who prided themselves on their literary taste, and called themselves "*Précieux*" and "*Précieuses*." Their first care has been to purify the language of low and vulgar words and expressions left by the wars and anarchy of earlier times, but they and their imitators had carried things to such an extreme as seriously to injure the language. Moreover, in trying to adapt their manners to the refinement they aimed at in their speech, they had brought the most absurd affectation into fashion. Molière always resisted their influence; and his own concise style offered a striking contrast to their insipid paraphrases. His first protest was 'Les Précieuses Ridicules.' He renewed the attack in 'La Critique de l'École des Femmes,' 'Le Misanthrope,' &c. His last shaft was 'Les Femmes Savantes,' written a short time before his death.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

LA GRANGE, }
DU CROISY, } *rejected lovers.*

GORGIBUS, *a worthy citizen.*

MARQUIS OF MASCARILLE, *valet to LA GRANGE.*

VISCOUNT OF JODELET, *valet to DU CROISY.*

ALMANZOR, *page to MADELON and CATHOS.*

MADELON, *daughter to GORGIBUS.*

CATHOS, *niece to GORGIBUS.*

MAROTTE, *maid to MADELON and CATHOS.*

Porters, neighbours, musicians.

THE AFFECTED LADIES.

SCENE I.—LA GRANGE, DU CROISY.

DU CRO. I say, La Grange.

LA GRA. What?

* DU CRO. Look at me a little without laughing.

LA GRA. Well!

✓ DU CRO. What do you think of our visit; are you much pleased with it?

LA GRA. Has either of us reason to be so, in your opinion?

DU CRO. No great reason, if the truth be told.

LA GRA. For my part I am dreadfully put out about it. Did ever anybody meet with a couple of silly country wenches giving themselves such airs as these? Did ever anybody see two men treated with more contempt than we were? It was as much as they could do to bring themselves to order chairs for us. I never saw such whispering, such yawning, such rubbing of eyes, such constant asking what o'clock it was. Why, they answered nothing but *yes* or *no* to all we said to them. Don't you think with me, that had we been the meanest persons in the world, they could hardly have behaved more rudely than they did?

DU CRO. You seem to take it very much to heart.

LA GRA. I should think I do. I feel it so much that I am determined to be revenged on them for their impertinence. I know well enough what made them look so coldly upon us: euphuism not only infects Paris, but has spread all over the country, and our absurd damsels have inhaled their good share of it. In a word, they are a compound of pedantry and affectation. I see pretty well

what a man must be like to be well received by them, and if you take my advice, we will play them a trick which shall show them their folly, and teach them in future to judge people with more discernment.

DU CRO. All right; but how will you manage it?

LA GRA. I have a certain valet, named Mascarille, who in the opinion of many people passes for a kind of wit,—nothing is cheaper now-a-days than wit,—an absurd fellow, who has taken into his head to ape the man of rank. He prides himself upon love-intrigues and poetry, and despises those of his own condition, so far as to call them vulgar wretches.

DU CRO. And what use do you intend to make of him?

LA GRA. I will tell you; he must but let us first get away from here.

SCENE II.—GORGIBUS, DU CROISY, LA GRANGE.

GOR. Well, gentlemen, you have seen my daughter and my niece; did all run smoothly? what is the result of your visit?

LA GRA. This you may better learn from them than from us; all we can say is, that we thank you for the honour you have done us, and remain your most humble servants.

DU CRO. And remain your most humble servants.

(Exeunt.)

GOR. Heyday! They seem to go away dissatisfied; what can have displeased them? I must know what's the matter. I say there!

SCENE III.—GORGIBUS, MAROTTE.

MAR. Did you call, sir?

GOR. Where are your mistresses?

MAR. In their dressing-room, sir.

GOR. What are they doing?

MAR. Making lip-salve.

GOR. They are always making salve. Tell them to come down.

(Exit MAROTTE.)

SCENE IV.—GORGIBUS.

I believe these foolish girls have determined to ruin me with their ointments. I see nothing about here but white of eggs, milk of roses,* and a thousand fiddle-faddles that I know nothing about. Since we came here they have used the fat of a dozen hogs at least, and four servants might live on the sheep's trotters they daily require.

SCENE V.—MADELON, CATHOS, GORGIBUS.

GOR. There is great need, surely, for you to spend so much money in greasing your nozzles! Tell me, please, what you can have done to those gentlemen, that I see them going away so coldly. Did I not ask you to receive them as persons whom I intended to give you for husbands?

MAD. What! my father, could you expect us to have any regard for the unconventional proceedings of such people?

CAT. What! my uncle, could you expect any girl, to the smallest extent in her senses, to reconcile herself to their persons?

GOR. And what is there the matter with them?

MAD. A fine way of making love to be sure, to begin at once with marriage!

GOR. And what would you have them begin with—concubinage? Does not their conduct honour you as much as it does me? Can anything be more complimentary to you? and is not the sacred bond they propose a proof of the honesty of their intentions?

MAD. Ah! father, how all you are saying betrays the vulgarity of your taste; I am ashamed to hear you speak as you do, and really you should make yourself acquainted with the fashionable air of things.

GOR. I care neither for airs nor songs. I tell you that marriage is a holy and sacred thing, and that they acted like honourable men in speaking of it to you from the first.

MAD. Really, if everybody was like you, how soon a

* *Lait virginal* seems to be untranslatable into modern English. Despois gives in full the recipe for making it. It can also be found in the 'Pharmacopœia Universalis' (Jourdan); in this work it is also called *aqua cosmetica*.

love-romance would be ended ! What a fine thing it would have been if at starting Cyrus had married Mandane, and Aronce had been given straight off to Clélie ! *

GOR. What in the world is the girl talking about !

MAD. My cousin will tell you, as well as I, that marriage, my father, should never take place till after other adventures. A lover who wants to be attractive should know how to utter noble sentiments, to sigh delicate, tender, and rapturous vows. He should pay his addresses according to rules. In the first place, it should be either at church or in the promenade, or at some public ceremony, that he first sees the fair one with whom he falls in love ; or else fate should will his introduction to her by a relation or a friend, and he should leave her house thoughtful and melancholy. For a while, he conceals his love from the object of his passion, but in the meantime pays her several visits, during which he never fails to start some subject of gallantry to exercise the thoughts of the assembled company. The day arrives for him to make his declaration. This should take place usually in some leafy garden-walk, whilst everybody is out of hearing. The declaration is followed by our immediate displeasure, which shows itself by our blushing, and causes our lover to be banished for a time from our presence. He finds afterwards the means to appease us ; to accustom us, by insensible degrees, to the rehearsal of his passion, and to obtain from us that confession which causes us so much pain. Then follow adventures : rivals who thwart our mutual inclination, persecution of fathers, jealousy based upon false appearances, reproaches, despair, elopement, and its consequences. It is thus things are carried on in high society, and in a well-regulated love-affair these rules cannot be dispensed with. But to plunge head-long into a proposal of marriage, to make love and the marriage settlements go hand in hand, is to begin the romance at the wrong end. Once more, father, there is nothing more shopkeeper-like than such proceedings, and the bare mention of it makes me feel ill.

GOR. What the devil is the meaning of all this jargon ? Is that what you call, "elevated style" ?

* Characters in the romances of Mademoiselle de Soudéry, ' Artamène ' and ' Clélie. '

CAT. Indeed, uncle, my cousin states the case with all veracity. How can one be expected to receive with gratification persons whose addresses are altogether an impropriety? I feel certain that they have never seen the map* of the *Country of Tenderness*, and that *Billets-doux*, *Trifling attentions*, *Flattering letters*, and *Sprightly verses* are regions unknown to them. Was it not plainly marked in all their person? Are you not conscious that their external appearance was in no way calculated to give a good opinion of them at first sight? To come on a love-visit with a leg lacking adornment, a hat destitute of feathers, a head unartistic as to its hair, and a coat that suffers from an indigence of ribbons! Heavens! what lovers! What frugality of dress! What barrenness of conversation! It is not to be endured. I also noticed that their bands were not made by the fashionable milliner, and that their *hauts-de-chausses*† were at least six inches too narrow.

GOR. I believe they are both crazed; not a word can I understand of all this gibberish—Cathos, and you, Madelon

MAD. Pray, father, give up those strange names, and call us otherwise.

GOR. Strange names! what do you mean? are they not those which were given you at your baptism?

MAD. Ah me! how vulgar you are! My constant wonder is that you could ever have such a soul of wit as I for a daughter. Did ever anybody in refined language speak of "Cathos"‡ and "Madelon," and must you not admit that a name such as either of these, would be quite sufficient to ruin the finest romance in the world?

CAT. It is but too true, uncle, that it painfully shocks a delicate ear to hear those names pronounced; and the name of Polixène which my cousin has chosen,§ and that of Aminte which I have taken for myself, have a charm which you cannot deny.

* "*Carte du tendre*" published in the first part of '*Clélie*.'

† "*Hauts-de-chausses*" = breeches. See '*The School for Husbands*,' Act i. Sc. i.

‡ Cathos equals Cathau in the '*Barbouillé*.' Both are short forms of Catherine.

§ All the "*Précieuses*" had borrowed names.

GOR. Listen to me; one word is as good as a hundred. I won't have you adopt any other name than those given to you by your godfathers and godmothers; and as for the gentlemen in question, I know their families and their fortune, and I have made up my mind that you shall take them for husbands. I am tired of having you upon my hands: it is too much for a man of my age to have to look after two young girls.

CAT. Well, uncle, all I can say is that I think marriage is altogether a very shocking thing. How can one endure the thought of lying by the side of a man really unclothed.

MAD. Let us enjoy for a time the *beau monde* of Paris, where we are only just arrived. Let us leisurely weave our own romance, and do not, we beg, hasten so much its conclusion.

GOR. (*aside*). They are far gone, there is no doubt about it. (*aloud*) Once more, understand me, get rid of all this nonsense, for I mean to have my own way; to cut matters short, either you will both be married before long or, upon my word, you shall both be shut up in a nunnery. I'll take my oath of it. (*Exit.*)

SCENE VI.—CATHOS, MADELON.

CAT. Ah! my dear, how deeply immersed in matter your father is, how dull is his understanding, and what darkness overcasts his soul.

MAD. What can I say, my dear? * I am thoroughly ashamed for him. I can scarcely persuade myself that I am really his daughter, and I feel sure that at some future time it will be discovered that I am of a more illustrious descent.

CAT. I fully believe it; yes, it is exceedingly probable. And when I too consider myself . . .

(*Enter MAROTTE.*)

SCENE VII.—CATHOS, MADELON, MAROTTE.

MAR. There is a footman below, inquiring if you are at home; he says that his master wants to see you.

* "Ma chère" (my dear) was particularly affected by the "Précieuses;" at last "une chère" became equivalent to "une Précieuse."

MAD. Learn, imbecile, to express yourself with less vulgarity. Say: Here is an indispensable, who is inquiring if it is convenient for you to be visible.

MAR. Why! I don't understand Latin, and I hav'n't learned filsofy out of the "Grand Cyrus," as you have done.

MAD. The wretched creature! what a trial it is to bear with it! And who is this footman's master?

MAR. He told me it was the Marquis of Mascarille.

MAD. Ah! my dear, a marquis! Go by all means, and say that we are visible. No doubt it is some wit who has heard us spoken of.

CAT. It must be so, my dear.

MAD. We must receive him in this parlour rather than in our own room. Let us at least arrange our hair a little and keep up our reputation. Quick, come along and hold before us, in here, the counsellor of the graces.

MAR. Goodness! I don't know what kind of an animal that is; you must speak like a Christian if you wish me to understand you.

CAT. Bring us the looking glass, ignorant girl that you are, and mind you do not defile its brightness by the communication of your image. *(Exeunt.)*

SCENE VIII.—MASCARILLE and two CHAIRMEN.

MASC. Stop, chairmen, stop! Gently, gently, be careful I say! One would think these rascals intend to break me to pieces against the walls and pavement.

1ST CH. Well! you see, master, the door is narrow, and you wished us to bring you right in.

MASC. I should think so! Would you have me, jackanapes, risk the condition of my feathers to the inclemencies of the rainy season, and that I should give to the mud the impression of my shoes? Be off, take your chair away.

2ND CH. Pay us, then, sir, if you please.

MASC. Ha! what's that you say?

2ND CH. I say, sir, that we want our money, if you please.

MASC. *(giving him a box on the ear)*. How, scoundrel, you ask money of a person of my rank!

2ND CH. Are poor people to be paid in this fashion? and does your rank get us a dinner?

MASC. Ha! I will teach you to know your right place! Do you dare, you scoundrels, to set me at defiance?

1ST CH. (*taking up one of the poles of the chair*). Pay us at once; that's what I say.

MASC. What?

1ST CH. I must have the money this minute.

MASC. Now this is a sensible fellow.

1ST CH. Quick then.

MASC. Ay, you speak as you should do; but as for that other fellow, he doesn't know what he says. Here, are you satisfied?

1ST CH. No, you struck my companion, and I (*holding up his pole*).

MASC. Gently, here's something for the blow. People can get everything out of me when they set about it in the right way; now go, but mind you come and fetch me by and by, to carry me to the Louvre for the *petit coucher*.*

SCENE IX.—MAROTTE, MASCARILLE.

MAR. Sir, my mistresses will be here directly.

MASC. Tell them not to hurry themselves; I am comfortably established here for waiting.

MAR. Here they are.

SCENE X.—MADELON, CATHOS, MASCARILLE, ALMANZOR.

MASC. (*after having bowed to them*). Ladies, you will be surprised, no doubt, at the boldness of my visit, but your reputation brings this troublesome incident upon you; merit has for me such powerful attractions, that I run after it wherever it is to be found.

MAD. If you pursue merit, it is not in our grounds that you should hunt after it.

CAT. If you find merit among us, you must have brought it here yourself.

MASC. I refuse assent to such an assertion. Fame tells

* Interval between the time when the king bade good night to the courtiers in general, and the time he really went to bed.

the truth in speaking of your worth; and you will pique, repique, and capot * all the fashionable world of Paris.

MAD. Your courtesy carries you somewhat too far in the liberality of your praises, and we must take care, my cousin and I, not to trust too much to the sweetness of your flattery.

CAT. My dear, we should call for chairs.

MAD. Almanzor!

ALM. Madam.

MAD. Quick! convey us hither at once the appliances of conversation. (ALMANZOR brings chairs.)

MASC. But stay, is there any security for me here?

CAT. What can you fear?

MASC. Some robbery of my heart, some assassination of my freedom. I see before me two eyes which seem to me to be very dangerous fellows; they abuse liberty and give no quarter. The deuce! no sooner is any one near, but they are up in arms, and ready for their murderous attack! Ah! upon my word I mistrust them! I shall either run away or require good security that they will do me no harm.

MAD. What playfulness, my dear.

CAT. Yes, I see he is an Amilcar.†

MAD. Do not fear; our eyes have no evil intentions, your heart may sleep in peace and may rest assured of their innocence.

CAT. But, for pity's sake, sir, do not be inexorable to that arm-chair which for the last quarter of an hour has stretched out its arms to you; satisfy the desire it has of embracing you.

MASC. (after having combed ‡ himself and adjusted his cantons §). Well, ladies, what is your opinion of Paris?

* Terms from the game of piquet. The sense is: you will carry everything before you.

† Character in the romance of 'Clélie.'

‡ "After you are seated, and have paid your first compliments . . . , it is proper to take off your right-hand glove, pull out of your pocket a large horn comb, with the teeth far apart, and gently comb your hair, whether your own or false."—'Les Lois de la Galanterie,' quoted by Despois.

§ See 'The School for Husbands,' Act. i. Sc. i.

MAD. Alas! can there be two opinions? It would be the antipodes of reason not to confess that Paris is the great museum of wonders, the centre of good taste, of wit and gallantry.

MASC. I think for my part that out of Paris people of position cannot exist.

CAT. That is a never-to-be-disputed truth.

MASC. It is somewhat muddy, but then we have sedan-chairs.

MAD. Yes, a chair is a wonderful safeguard against the insults of mud and bad weather.

MASC. You must have many visitors? What great wit belongs to your circle?

MAD. Alas! we are not known yet; but we have every hope of being so before long, and a great friend of ours has promised to bring us all the gentlemen who have written in the *Elegant Extracts*.

CAT. As well as some others who, we are told, are the sovereign judges in matters of taste.

MASC. Leave that to me! I can manage that for you better than any one else. They all visit me, and I can truly say that I never get up in the morning without having half a dozen wits about me.

MAD. Ah! we should feel under the greatest obligation to you if you would be so kind as to do this for us: for it is certain one must be acquainted with all those gentlemen in order to belong to society. By them reputations are made in Paris, and you know that it is quite sufficient to be seen with some of them to acquire the reputation of a connoisseur, even though there should be no other foundation for the distinction. But, for my part, what I value most is, that in such society we learn a hundred things which it is one's duty to know and which are the quintessence of wit: the scandal of the day; the latest things out in prose or verse. We hear exactly and punctually that a Mr. A. has composed the most beautiful piece in the world on such and such a subject; that Mrs. B. has adapted words to such and such an air, that Mr. C. has composed a madrigal on the fidelity of his lady-love, and Mr. D. upon the faithlessness of his; that yesterday

evening Mr. E. wrote a *sixain** to Miss F., to which she sent an answer this morning at eight o'clock; that Mr. G. has such and such a project in his head, that Mr. H. is occupied with the third volume of his romance, and that Mr. J. has his work in the press. By knowledge like this we acquire consideration in every society; whereas if we are left in ignorance of such matters all the wit we may possess is a thing of nought and as dust in the balance.

CAT. Indeed I think it is carrying the ridiculous to the extreme, for any one who makes the least pretence to wit, not to know even the last little quatrain that has been written. For my part I should feel greatly ashamed if some one were by chance to ask me if I had seen some new thing, which I had not seen.

MASC. It is true that it is disgraceful not to be one of the very first to know what is going on. But do not make yourself anxious about it; I will establish an Academy of wits in your house, and I promise you that not a single line shall be written in all Paris which you shall not know by heart before anybody else. I, your humble servant, indulge a little in writing poetry when I feel in the vein; and you will find handed about in all the most fashionable *ruelles*† of Paris, two hundred songs, as many sonnets, four hundred epigrams, and more than a thousand madrigals, without reckoning enigmas and portraits.

MAD. I must acknowledge that I am madly fond of portraits; there is nothing more elegant according to my opinion.

MASC. Portraits are difficult, and require a deep insight into character:‡ but you shall see some of mine which will please you.

CAT. I must say that for my part I am appallingly fond of enigmas.

* A stanza is called *quatrain* if it has four lines, *sixain* if it has six, *huitain* if it has eight, and so on.

† "*Ruelles*." The only equivalent in our days would be *drawing-rooms*. It has somewhat the sense of "*conversazione*." Ladies used to receive their visitors sitting, or lying dressed on a bed richly adorned. The small space between the bed and the wall was reserved for their intimate friends or acquaintances, and called "*ruelle*." Later on they gave up the bed, but still received at times in the bedroom, which retained the name of "*ruelle*."

‡ "*Les Caractères de La Bruyère*" contains many portraits.

MASC. They form a good occupation for the mind, and I have already written four this morning, which I will give you to guess.

MAD. Madrigals are charming when they are neatly turned.

MASC. I have a special gift that way, and I am engaged in turning the whole Roman History into madrigals.

MAD. Ah! that will be exquisite. Pray let me have a copy, if you publish it.

MASC. I promise you each a copy beautifully bound. It is beneath my rank to occupy myself in that fashion, but I do it for the benefit of the publishers, who leave me no peace.

MAD. I should think that it must be a most pleasant thing to see one's name in print.

MASC. Undoubtedly. By the bye, let me repeat to you some extempore verses I made yesterday at the house of a friend of mine, a duchess, whom I went to see. You must know that I'm a wonderful hand at impromptus.

CAT. An impromptu is the touchstone of genius.

MASC. Listen.

MAD. We are all ears.

MASC. *Oh! oh! I was not taking care.
While thinking not of harm, I watch my fair.
Your lurking eye my heart doth steal away.
Stop thief! Stop thief! Stop thief! I say.*

CAT. Ah me! It is gallant to the last degree.

MASC. Yes, all I do has a certain easy air about it. There is a total absence of the pedant about all my writings.

MAD. They are thousands and thousands of miles from that.

MASC. Did you notice the beginning? *Oh! oh!* There is something exceptional in that *oh! oh!* like a man who bethinks himself all of a sudden—*Oh! oh!* Surprise is well depicted, is it not? *Oh! oh!*

MAD. Yes, I think that *oh! oh!* admirable.

MASC. At first sight it does not seem much.

CAT. Ah! what do you say? these things cannot be too highly valued.

MAD. Certainly, and I would rather have composed that *oh! oh!* than an epic poem.

MASC. Upon my word now, you have good taste.

MAD. Why, yes, perhaps it's not altogether bad.

MASC. But do you not admire also, *I was not taking care?* *I was not taking care*: I did not notice it, quite a natural way of speaking you know: *I was not taking care*. *While thinking not of harm*: whilst innocently, without forethought, like a poor sheep, *I watch my fair*: that is to say, I amuse myself by considering, observing, contemplating you. *Your lurking eye*,—what do you think of this word *lurking*? Do you not think it well chosen?

CAT. Perfectly well.

MASC. *Lurking*, hiding: you would say, a cat just going to catch a mouse: *lurking*.

MAD. Nothing could be better.

MASC. *My heart doth steal away*: snatch it away, carries it off from me. *Stop thief! stop thief! stop thief!* Would you not imagine it to be a man shouting and running after a robber? *Stop thief! stop thief! stop thief!*

MAD. It must be acknowledged that it is witty and gallant.

MASC. I must sing you the tune I made to it.

CAT. Ah! you have learnt music?

MASC. Not a bit of it!

CAT. Then how can you have set it to music?

MASC. People of my position know everything without ever having learnt.

MAD. Of course it is so, my dear.

MASC. Just listen, and see if the tune is to your taste; hem, hem, la, la, la, la, la. The brutality of the season has greatly injured the delicacy of my voice; but it is of no consequence; permit me, without ceremony: (*he sings*)

Oh! oh! I was not taking care.

While thinking not of harm, I watch my fair.

Your lurking eye my heart doth steal away.

Stop thief! Stop thief! Stop thief! I say.

CAT. What soul-subduing music! One would willingly die while listening.

MAD. What soft languor creeps over one's heart!

MASC. Do you not find the thought clearly expressed in the song? *Stop thief, stop thief*. And then as if one

suddenly cried out *stop, stop, stop, stop, stop* thief. Then all at once, like a person out of breath—*Stop* thief!

MAD. It shows a knowledge of perfect beauty, every part is inimitable, both the words and the air enchant me.

CAT. I never yet met with anything worthy of being compared to it.

MASC. All I do comes naturally to me. I do it without study.

MAD. Nature has treated you like a fond mother; you are her spoiled child.

MASC. How do you spend your time, ladies?

CAT. Oh! in doing nothing at all.

MAD. Until now, we have been in a dreadful dearth of amusements.

MASC. I should be happy to take you to the play one of these days, if you would permit me; the more so as there is a new piece going to be acted which I should be glad to see in your company.

MAD. There is no refusing such an offer.

MASC. But I must beg of you to applaud it well when we are there, for I have promised my help to praise up the piece; and the author came to me again this morning to beg my assistance. It is the custom for authors to come and read their new plays to us people of rank, so that they may persuade us to approve their work, and to give them a reputation. I leave you to imagine, if, when we say anything, the pit dare contradict us. As for me, I am most scrupulous, and when once I have promised my assistance to a poet I always call out "splendid! beautiful!" even before the candles are lighted.

MAD. Do not speak of it; Paris is a most wonderful place; a hundred things happen every day there of which country-people, however clever they may be, have no idea.

CAT. It is sufficient; now we understand this, we shall consider ourselves under the obligation of praising all that is said.

MASC. I do not know whether I am mistaken; but you seem to me to have written some play yourselves.

MAD. Ah! there may be some truth in what you say.

MASC. Upon my word, we must see it. Between ourselves I have composed one which I intend shortly to bring out.

CAT. Indeed; and to what actors do you mean to give it?

MASC. What a question! Why, to the actors of the Hôtel de Bourgogne* of course; they alone can give a proper value to a piece. The others are a pack of ignoramuses, who recite their parts just as one speaks every day of one's life; they have no idea of thundering out verses, or of pausing at a fine passage. How can one make out where the fine lines are if the actor does not stop at them, and thus tell you when you are to applaud?

CAT. Certainly, there is always a way of making an audience feel the beauties of a play; and things are valued according to the way they are put before you.

MASC. How do you like my lace, feathers, and et-ceteras?† Do you find any incongruity between them and my coat?

CAT. Not the slightest.

MASC. The ribbon is well-chosen, you think?

MAD. Astonishingly well. It is real Perdrigeon.‡

MASC. What do you say of my canions?

MAD. They look very fashionable.

MASC. I can at least boast that they are a whole quarter of a yard wider than those usually worn.

MAD. I must acknowledge that I have never yet seen the elegance of the adjustment carried to such perfection.

MASC. May I beg of you to direct your olfactory senses to these gloves?

MAD. They smell terribly sweet.

CAT. I never inhaled a better made perfume.

MASC. And this? (*He bends forward for them to smell his powdered wig.*)

MAD. It has the true aristocratic odour. One's finest senses are exquisitely affected by it.

* Moliere's first attack on the Comedians of the Hôtel de Bourgogne. See 'L'Impromptu de Versailles.'

† The original has *petite ote*, literally *gblets*, but employed at the time to signify all the smaller parts of the dress.

‡ A famous draper.

MASC. You say nothing of my plumes! What do you think of them?

CAT. Astonishingly beautiful!

MASC. Do you know that every tip cost me a louis d'or? It is my way to prefer indiscriminately everything of the best.

MAD. I assure you that I greatly sympathise with you. I am furiously* delicate about everything I wear, and even my socks† must come from the best hands.

MASC. (*crying out suddenly*). O! O! O! gently, gently ladies; ladies, this is unkind, I have good reason to complain of your behaviour; it is not fair.

CAT. What is it? What is the matter?

MASC. Matter? What, both of you against my heart, and at the same time too! attacking me right and left! ah! it is contrary to fair play; I shall cry out murder.

CAT. (*to MADELON*). It must be acknowledged that he says things in a manner altogether his own.

MAD. His way of putting things is exquisitely admirable.

CAT. (*to MASCARILLE*). You are more afraid than hurt, and your heart cries out before it is touched.

MASC. The deuce! why it is sore from head to foot.

SCENE XI.—CATHOS, MADELON, MASCARILLE, MAROTTE.

MAR. Madam, somebody wants to see you.

MAD. Who is it?

MAR. The Viscount de Jodelet.

MASC. The Viscount de Jodelet!

MAR. Yes, sir.

CAT. Do you know him?

MASC. He is my very best friend.

MAD. Make him come in at once.

MASC. It is now some time since we saw each other, and I am delighted at this accidental meeting.

CAT. Here he is.

* *He is furiously gentle; I love you horribly; It is greatly small; He is terribly happy, etc., etc., expressions very dear to the "Précieuse."*

† *Chaussettes*: linen socks worn underneath the ordinary stockings of cloth or silk.

SCENE XII.—CATHOS, MADELON, JODELET, MASCARILLE,
MAROTTE, ALMANZOR.

MASC. Ah! Viscount!

JOD. Ah! Marquis! (*They embrace each other.*)

MASC. How pleased I am to see you!

JOD. How delighted I am to meet you here!

MASC. Ah! embrace me again, I pray you.

MAD. (*to CATHOS*). We are on the road to be known, my dear; people of fashion are beginning to find the way to our house.

MASC. Ladies, allow me to introduce you to this gentleman; upon my word of honour, he is worthy of your acquaintance.

JOD. It is but right we should come and pay you the respect that we owe you; and your queenly charms demand the humble homage of all.

MAD. This is carrying your civilities to the extreme bounds of flattery.

CAT. We shall have to mark this day in our diary as a very happy one.

MAD. (*to ALMANZOR*). Come, thoughtless juvenal, must you everlastingly be told the same things. Do you not see that the addition of another arm-chair is necessary?

MASC. Do not wonder if you see the Viscount thus; he has just recovered from an illness which has left him pale as you see him.

JOD. It is the result of constant attendance at court, and of the fatigues of war.

MASC. Do you know, ladies, that you behold in Viscount Jodelet one of the bravest men of the age—a perfect hero.

JOD. You are not behind in this respect, marquis, and we know what you can do.

MASC. It is true that we have seen each other in the field.

JOD. And in places too where it was warm indeed.

MASC. (*looking at CATHOS and MADELON*). Ay, ay, but not so warm as it is here! Ha, ha, ha!

JOD. Our acquaintance began in the army; the first

time we met he commanded a regiment of horse on board the galleys of Malta.

MASC. It is true; but you were in the service before me, and I remember that I was but a subaltern when you commanded two thousand horse.

JOD. War is a grand thing. But s'death! now-a-days the court rewards very badly men of merit like us.

MASC. Yes, yes, there's no doubt about it; and I intend to let my sword rest in its scabbard.

CAT. For my part I am unutterably fond of men of the army.

MAD. And so am I, but I like to see wit season bravery.

MASC. Do you remember, Viscount, our carrying that half-moon at Arras?

JOD. What do you mean by "half-moon,"* it was a complete full one.

MASC. Yes, I believe you are right.

JOD. I ought to remember it, I was wounded then in the leg by a hand-grenade, and I still bear the scars. Just feel here, I pray: you can realize what a wound it was.

CAT. (*after having felt the place*). It is true that the scar is very large.

MASC. Give me your hand, and feel this one, just here at the back of my head! Have you found it?

MAD. Yes, I feel something.

MASC. It is a musket-shot I received the last campaign I made.

JOD. (*uncovering his breast*). Here is another wound which went quite through me at the battle of Gravelines.

MASC. (*about to unbutton*). And I will show you a terrible scar which

MAD. Pray do not, we believe you without seeing.

MASC. They are honourable marks, which tell the stuff a man is made of.

CAT. We have no doubt whatever of your valour.

MASC. Viscount, is your carriage waiting?

JOD. Why?

* *Half-moon* is a military term. It is scarcely necessary to say that there is no "*full-moon*" in fortification.

MASC. Because we would have taken these ladies for a drive, and have given them a collation.*

MAD. Thank you, but we could not have gone out to-day.

MASC. Very well, then, let us send for musicians and have a dance.

JOD. A happy thought upon my word.

MAD. We can consent to that: but we must make some addition to our company.

MASC. Hallo there! Champagne, Picard, Bourguignon, Cascaret, Basque, La Verdure, Lorrain, Provençal, La Violette! Deuce take all the lackeys! I don't believe there is a man in all France worse served than I am. The villains are always out of the way when they are wanted.

MAD. Almanzor, tell the servants of the Marquis to go and fetch some musicians, and then ask those gentlemen and ladies who live close by to come and people the solitude of our ball. (*Exit ALMANZOR.*)

MASC. Viscount, what do you say of those eyes?

JOD. And you, marquis, what do you think of them yourself.

MASC. I? I say that our liberty will have some trouble in coming off scathless. At least as far as I am concerned, I feel an unaccustomed agitation, and my heart hangs as by a single thread.

MAD. How natural is all that he says! He gives to everything a most pleasing turn.

CAT. His expenditure of wit is really tremendous.

MASC. To show you the truth of what I say, I will make some extempore verses upon the state of my feelings.

CAT. Oh! I beseech you by all the devotion of my heart to let us hear something made expressly for us.

JOD. I should delight to do as much, but the quantity of blood I have lately lost has rather weakened my poetic vein.

* *Cadeau* had, in the time of Molière, the meaning of an entertainment, and more especially one given by gentlemen to ladies. That it did not then, as now, mean a present, is evident by a comparison of the sixth and tenth maxims in 'L'École des Femmes,' Act iii, Sc. iii.

MASC. Deuce take it all! I can always make the first verse to my satisfaction, but feel perplexed about the rest. After all, you know, this is being a little too much in a hurry. I will take my own time to make you some extempore verses, which you will find the most beautiful in the world.

JOD. (*to MADELON*). His wit is devilish fine!

MAD. Gallant and neatly turned.

MASC. Viscount, tell me, have you seen the countess lately?

JOD. It is about three weeks since I paid her a visit.

MASC. Do you know that the duke came to see me this morning, and wanted to take me out into the country to hunt a stag with him?

MAD. Here come our friends.

SCENE XIII.—LUCILE, CELIMÈNE, CATHOS, MADELON, MASCARILLE, JODELET, MAROTTE, ALMANZOR, MUSICIANS.

MAD. My dears, we beg you will excuse us. These gentlemen had a fancy for the soul of motion,* and we sent for you to fill up the void of our assembly.

LUC. You are very kind.

MASC. This is only a ball got up in haste, but one of these days we will have one in due form. Have the musicians come?

ALM. Yes, sir, here they are.

CAT. Come then, my dears, take your places.

MASC. (*dancing alone by way of prelude*). La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

MAD. He has a most elegant figure.

CAT. And seems a proper dancer.

MASC. (*taking out MADELON to dance*). The liberty of my heart will dance a couranto as well as my feet. Play in time, musicians. O! what ignorant fellows! There is no possibility of dancing with them. Devil take you, can't you play in time? La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la. Steady, you village scrappers.

* The original has *les âmes des pieds*, but *soul of the feet* makes a pun in English. *Violins* are meant.

JOD. (*dancing in his turn*). Gently, don't play so fast, I have only just recovered from an illness.

(*Enter DU CROISY and LA GRANGE.*)

SCENE XIV.—DU CROISY, LA GRANGE, CATHOS, MADELON, LUCILE, CELIMÈNE, JODELET, MASCARILLE, MAROTTE, MUSICIANS.

LA GRA. (*a stick in his hand*). Ah! scoundrels, what are you doing here? We have been looking for you these three hours. (*He beats MASCARILLE and JODELET.*)

MASC. Oh! oh! oh! You never said anything about blows.

JOD. Oh! oh! oh!

LA GRA. It becomes you well, you rascal, to ape the man of rank.

DU CRO. This will teach you to know your position.

(*Exeunt DU CROISY and LA GRANGE.*)

SCENE XV.—CATHOS, MADELON, LUCILE, CELIMÈNE, MASCARILLE, JODELET, MAROTTE, MUSICIANS.

MAD. What does this all mean?

JOD. It is a wager.

CAT. What! to suffer yourselves to be beaten in that fashion!

MASC. Yes, I would not take any notice of it, I have a violent temper, and I should not have been able to command it.

MAD. Such an insult in our presence!

MASC. Not worth mentioning, we have known each other for a long while now; and among friends we must not take offence at such trifles.

(*Re-enter DU CROISY and LA GRANGE.*)

SCENE XVI.—DU CROISY, LA GRANGE, MADELON, CATHOS, CELIMÈNE, LUCILE, MASCARILLE, JODELET, MAROTTE, MUSICIANS.

LA GRA. Ah! you rascals, you shall not laugh at us, I assure you. Come in, you there.

(*Three or four men* enter.*)

MAD. What do you mean by coming to disturb us in our own house?

DU CRO. What ladies! shall we suffer our servants to be better received than we were? shall we allow them to come and make love to you at our expense, and to give you a ball?

MAD. Your servants!

LA GRA. Yes, our servants; and it is neither proper nor honest in you to entice them away from their duty as you have done.

MAD. Heavens! What insolence!

LA GRA. But they shall not have the advantage of wearing our clothes to dazzle your eyes, and if you wish to love them, it shall be for their good looks. Quick, you fellows, strip them at once.

JOD. Farewell our finery.

MASC. Farewell, marquisate; farewell, viscountship!

DU CRO. Ah! ah! rascals, have you the impudence to wish to cut us out? You will have to find elsewhere, I can tell you, wherewith to make yourselves agreeable to your lady-loves.

LA GRA. To supplant us; and that, too, in our own clothes. It is too much!

MASC. O Fortune, how inconstant thou art!

DU CRO. Quick, I say, strip off everything that belongs to us.

LA GRA. Take away all the clothes; quick! Now, ladies, in their present condition, you may make love to them as much as you please. We leave you entirely free to act. This gentleman and I assure you that we shall be in no way jealous.

* *Spadassin* = bully, hired assassin. Compare *La Rapière* in 'Le Dépit Amoureux.'

SCENE XVII.—MADELON, CATHOS, JODELET, MASCARILLE,
MUSICIANS.

CAT. Ah! what humiliation.

MAD. I am nearly dying with vexation.

1ST MUS. (*to MASCARILLE*). And what does all this mean? Who is to pay us?

MASC. Ask my lord the Viscount.

2ND MUS. (*to JODELET*). Who is to give us our money?

JOD. Ask my lord the Marquis. (*Enter GORGIBUS.*)

SCENE XVIII.—GORGIBUS, MADELO, CATHOS; JODELET,
MASCARILLE; MUSICIANS.

GOR. (*to MADELO and CATHOS*). From all I hear and see you have got us into a nice mess; the gentlemen and ladies who have just left have given me a fine account of your doings!

MAD. Ah! my father, it is a most cruel trick they have played us.

GOR. Yes, it is a cruel trick, no doubt, but one which results from your folly—miserable simpletons that you are. They felt insulted by your way of receiving them; and I, wretched man, must swallow the affront as best I may.

MAD. Ah! I will be revenged or die in the attempt. And you, wretches! dare you stop here after all your insolence?

MASC. To treat a marquis in this manner! Yes, that's the way of the world; we are spurned by those who till lately cherished us. Come along, come along, my friend, let us go and seek our fortunes elsewhere, I see that nothing but outward show pleases here, and that they have no consideration for virtue unadorned.

(*Exeunt MASCARILLE and JODELET.*)

SCENE XIX.—GORGIBUS, MADELO, CATHOS, MUSICIANS.

1ST MUS. Sir, we shall expect you to pay us, since they do not; for it was here we played.

GOR. (*beating them*). Yes, yes, I will pay you, and here

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is the coin you shall receive. As for you, stupid, foolish girls, I don't know what keeps me from giving you as much. We shall become the laughing-stock of the whole neighbourhood; this is the result of all your ridiculous nonsense. Go, hide yourselves, idiots; hide yourselves for ever (*exeunt MADELON and CATHOS*); and you the cause of all their folly, worthless trash, mischievous pastimes of vacant minds, romances, verses, songs, sonnets, lays and lies,* may the devil take you all!

* Molière puts an old jingle in the mouth of Gorgibus: *Sonnets et sonnettes*. *Sonnets and bells* means nothing. The translation of Baker and Miller has *sonnets and sonatas*!

SGANARELLE.

(SGANARELLE, ou LE COCU IMAGINAIRE.)

'Sganarelle, ou le Cocu Imaginaire,' was acted on the 28th of May, 1660, six months after 'Les Précieuses Ridicules,' and obtained a great success. The character of Sganarelle, first sketched in 'Le Médecin Volant,' is a creation of Molière. Whenever a Sganarelle appears, it is to represent the weak, mean, selfish, cynical side of human nature.

Molière acted the part of Sganarelle.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

GORGIBUS, *citizen of Paris.*

SGANARELLE, *citizen of Paris.*

LÉLIE, *in love with CÉLIE.*

GROS-RENÉ, *valet to LÉLIE.*

VILLEBREQUIN, *father to VALÈRE.*

A relation of SGANARELLE's wife.

CÉLIE, *daughter to GORGIBUS.*

SGANARLE's wife.

CÉLIE's maid.

Scene: a public place in Paris.

SGANARELLE.

SCENE I.—GORGIBUS, CÉLIE, CÉLIE'S Maid.

CEL. (*coming out: she is in tears*). Ah! I never can consent to it; no, never.

GOR. What are you muttering, impertinence? Do you mean to set yourself against what I have decided for you? Have I not entire power over you? and do you think you can overrule your father's good sense with silly reasons from your small brain? Who do you think, simpleton, has a right to be master in this house—you or I? Who can judge better what is good for you? By the mass! do not try my patience too much, or you will soon feel what strength there is left in this old arm of mine. Believe me, the shortest way for you, young obstinacy, will be to accept without more ado the husband I have chosen for you. Don't come and tell me again that you don't know his disposition, and that you must really see if he suits you. I know what fortune will come to him, and what do I care to know besides? Does a husband with twenty thousand ducats lack charms? Let him be what he will, I say that with this sum of money, he is a very worthy man; yes, that's what I say.

CEL. Alas!

GOR. "Alas!" What do you mean by that? Did you ever hear such an absurd "alas"? Don't you put me in too great a passion, or I shall make you say "alas" with right good cause. All this comes of reading romances night and day; your head is full of all kinds of rubbish about love, and you think a great deal less of God than of 'Clélie.' Throw into the fire all these mischievous books which daily corrupt the minds of so many young people,

and instead of such trumpery read the *Quatrains* * of Pibrac, and the learned *Tablets* † of Councillor Matthew—a valuable work, full of wise sayings which you can learn by heart. The ‘*Guide for Sinners*’ ‡ is also a good book; in it you can soon learn to spend your life properly: if you had only read works of this kind you would know better how to submit to my wishes.

CEL. What! do you really ask me, father, to forget the love I owe to L  lie? If I thought of disposing of my hand without your consent I know I should be to blame, but you cannot forget that it was you yourself who engaged me to him.

GOR. Had you engaged yourself to L  lie twenty times over, another suitor has turned up whose fortune frees you from your promises. L  lie is a good looking young fellow enough, I admit, but remember that the money should be the first consideration, and that everything else should give way to it. With money the most ugly acquire charms to please, and without it, beauty is a sorry look-out. I do not suppose you are very fond of Val  re, but if you do not like him as a lover, you will no doubt like him as a husband. The very name of husband has something in it more endearing than one would imagine, and oftentimes love is the fruit of marriage. But I am very foolish to go on thus reasoning when I have the power to command. Cease your senseless speeches and your ridiculous complaints. Val  re is coming to see you this evening; if you fail to receive him well, if you do not give him a hearty welcome I I well, I will say no more for the present; but mind.

SCENE II.—C  LIE, C  LIE’S *Maid*.

MAID. What! do you persist in refusing what many another would be only too thankful to accept? You answer an offer of marriage with tears and put off saying

* “*Cinquante quatrains contenant pr  ceptes et enseignements utiles pour la vie de l’homme*,” &c., 1575. (See Despois.)

† “*Tablettes de la vie et de la mort*,” 1616. (See Despois.)

‡ Work by a Spanish Dominican, translated into French about eighty years before. (See Despois.)

yes so long; a thing so charming to say. Ah, me! I wish some one would find me a husband. It would not take me so long to decide; and far from thinking it such a hardship to say one *yes*, you would hear me repeat a dozen off-hand. The tutor who teaches your brother was quite right when, one day, speaking about this world, he said, "That a woman is like the ivy, which grows luxuriantly whilst it clings to some sturdy tree, but never thrives if it is separated from it." There is no greater truth, my dear mistress, and I, miserable sinner, have found it out. May Heaven have mercy upon my poor Martin's soul! As long as he lived my complexion was like that of a cherub, I was plump and comely, my eyes sparkled brightly, and my heart was at ease. Now I am always sad. During that happy time which flew away like lightning, I went to bed in the depth of winter without ever thinking of a fire; nay, even airing the sheets seemed to me ridiculous; and now I shiver in the dog-days. In short, there is nothing like having a husband near you during the night, were it only for the pleasure of hearing a "God bless you" whenever you happen to sneeze.

CEL. And can you advise me to behave so badly as to forsake L  lie, and accept this ugly fellow?

MAID. I must really say that your L  lie is very wrong to stop away at such an awkward time: so prolonged an absence says no good for his constancy to you, I fear.

CEL. (*showing her the portrait of L  lie*). Do not distress me with such sad forebodings. Look at these features; they speak to me of lasting love. No! I will not believe them deceitful! Such as art represents him here, he still is to me.

MAID. Yes, you are right, this is an honest face, and one which speaks of a man worthy of all your tenderness.

CEL. And yet I must . . . Ah! support me.

(*She lets fall the portrait of L  lie*.)

MAID. Madam, what is the matter? . . . Ah me! she is fainting! Help, quick, help!

SCENE III.—C  LIE, SGANARELLE, MAID.

SGA. What is it? Here I am.

MAID. Oh! sir, my mistress is dying.

SGA. Is that all? You made such a noise that I thought the end of the world was at hand. But let us see. Madam, are you dead? Humph! she does not say a word.

MAID. I will fetch somebody to carry her in; please support her a moment.

SCENE IV.—CÉLIE, SGANARELLE, *the Wife of SAGNARELLE.*

SGA. (*passing his hand over CÉLIE'S bosom*). She is cold all over, I don't know what to think. Let me get a little nearer and see if she breathes. I am not sure, but I believe there are still some signs of life.

WIFE OF SGA. (*looking from the window*). Ah! what do I see? My husband . . . in his arms . . . But I will go down and discover what this means. He is false to me, of that there's no doubt, I wish I could catch him.

SGA. We must seek at once for some assistance; she would be wrong to die. It is a very foolish thing to go into the other world as long as we can stay comfortably in this.

(*With the help of another man brought by the maid, he carries her into her house.*)

SCENE V.—*The Wife of SGANARELLE (alone).*

He is gone! how quickly he has disappeared! His flight has sadly disappointed my curiosity; but there is no longer any doubt that he betrays me, the little I have seen confirms all my suspicions. Well! I do not wonder any more at the coldness with which he answers my modest love: the ungrateful wretch! he reserves himself for others, and feeds their pleasures by starving mine. That's how husbands behave; what is lawful soon clogs. In the beginning it is all wonder, and they seem to have a most violent affection for us, but the traitors soon tire of our fondness for them, and carry elsewhere what they owe to us. Ah! what a pity it is that the law will not give us the power to change our husbands as often as we do our linen! It would be convenient; and I know of some besides myself that it would please exceedingly (*taking up the picture which CÉLIE had let fall*). Hallo! what is this trinket fortune sends me? The enamel is beautiful, the carving is charming, I must open it.

SCENE VI.—SGANARELLE, *the Wife of* SGANARELLE.

SGA. (*thinking himself alone*). They thought she was dead, but it was only a false alarm. At that pace she'll soon be well again. Ah! there's my wife.

WIFE OF SGA. (*thinking herself alone*). Oh dear! it is a miniature! What a fine painting of a handsome man!

SGA. (*aside, and looking over his wife's shoulder*). What is she looking at so attentively? This portrait bodes my honour no good. Very ugly suspicions are creeping over me.

WIFE OF SGA. (*without seeing her husband*). No, I never in all my life saw anything more beautiful! The workmanship is even more valuable than the gold. How sweet it smells too!

SGA. (*aside*). Eh! what! She is kissing it! I am in for it.

WIFE OF SGA. (*continues*). Ah! how delightful it must be to see one's self worshipped by such a man; if he told his love with any earnestness, how difficult it would be to resist the temptation. Alas! why hav'n't I such a fine looking husband? instead of my bald-pated old bumpkin. . . .

SGA. (*snatching the portrait from her*). Ah! I take you in the very act of blackening the honour of your husband! So, according to you, my most worthy spouse, all considered, the husband is not good enough for the wife? In the name of Beelzebub, who may take you off for all I care, what better match could you have wished for? What do you find to say against me? This shape, this presence which everybody admires, this face so fit to inspire love, and for which a thousand beauties sigh day and night; in short, the whole of my goodly person is not dainty enough to please you, eh? And to satisfy your ravenous appetite you must, forsooth, join to the husband the relish of a gallant, must you?

WIFE OF SGA. I think I see the object of your raillery. You think by this means

SGA. Don't try to impose on me. The fact is evident, and I have here in my hands proof enough of what I complain.

WIFE OF SGA. I am already quite angry enough with you,

and there is no need of vexing me with a new offence. Do you hear, give me back that pretty thing of mine, and think a little

SGA. Yes, I am thinking—thinking of breaking your neck: Ah! that I had the original as much at my mercy as I have the copy!

WIFE OF SGA. What for?

SGA. For nothing, darling. No, sweet object of my love; I am very wrong to complain, and my forehead should thank you for the favour received. (*looks at the picture*) There he is, the young exquisite, your pretty bed-fellow, the wicked cause of your secret passion, the wretch with whom

WIFE OF SGA. With whom go on.

SGA. With whom, I tell you Ah! I am almost bursting with vexation and shame.

WIFE OF SGA. What would the hopeless drunkard have me understand by this?

SGA. You know but too well, shameless woman. I shall be called no longer Sganarelle, but Signor Horn. My honour is at an end: but you who take it from me, depend upon it, one of your arms and two of your ribs broken will not satisfy me.

WIFE OF SGA. And you dare to speak to me in that fashion?

SGA. And you dare to play such diabolical tricks upon me?

WIFE OF SGA. What diabolical tricks? Can't you speak out plainly?

SGA. Oh! no. It is not worth mentioning! A stag's head-piece provided for my head is not worth the trouble of coming to see.

WIFE OF SGA. So that after having done me the greatest possible wrong which can call for the vengeance of a woman, you imagine that a stupid semblance of anger will prevent the effects of my resentment? The effrontery of such a proceeding is truly something new! He who does the injury is now the first to begin the quarrel!

SGA. The brazen-face woman! To see the bold front she puts on, would not anybody think her blameless?

WIFE OF SGA. Well, well, go on as you have begun,

praise your mistresses' beauty, tell them of your love, kiss them, pet them; but give me back my portrait, and don't fancy that I am deceived by you. I'm no fool.

(She snatches the picture from him and runs away.)

SGA. *(running after her)*. So, you think to escape me; but I will get hold of it yet, in spite of you.

SCENE VII.—LÉLIE, GROS-RENÉ.

GR.-RE. At last we have arrived. But, sir, if I dared I should like to ask you one question.

LÉL. What is it?

GR.-RE. Are you possessed by some devil that you do not sink under such efforts? For eight whole days together, have we been riding long stages, driving the spur into our confounded hacks, whose cursed jog shook us so abominably that, for my part, every blessed limb I have is out of joint—without complaining of a worse mishap that troubles me very much, I won't say where. And yet, no sooner are you arrived than out you go, looking as fresh and well as you please, without even resting a moment or taking a mouthful to eat.

LÉL. You cannot blame my haste, I am alarmed by a report that Célie is going to be married. You know how I worship her; and I must ascertain if there is any truth in this distressing rumour.

GR.-RE. Ay, sir, but a good meal would be of service to you in the clearing up of this matter: and your heart would acquire more strength to withstand the frowns of fortune. I judge of that by my own self. When I am hungry, the least failure lays hold of me and brings me down; but when I have eaten my full, my soul is fortified against all emergencies, and the greatest misfortunes would not move me. Believe me, have a good hearty meal, eat freely, drink to match, to help yourself against what may be in reserve for you, and shut all opening to grief by floating your soul in wine.

LÉL. I could not eat.

GR.-RE. *(aside)*. Hang me if I could not! *(aloud)* Yet your dinner will be ready presently.

LÉL. Do not trouble me about it, I command you.

GR.-RE. What a barbarous command!

LEL. I am not hungry, but anxious.

GR.-RE. And I am hungry and anxious as well, to see that you think of nothing but love.

LEL. Very well, leave me to inquire after her I adore, and without troubling me any more, go and satisfy your appetite.

GR.-RE. I must needs obey my master's orders.

SCENE VIII.—LÉLIE (*alone*).

No, no, I am foolish to be so fearful; the father promised her to me, and she has given me such proofs of her love, that it is absurd for me not to hope.

SCENE IX.—SGANARELLE, LÉLIE.

SGA. (*not seeing LÉLIE, and holding the portrait in his hand*). I have got it, and can examine at leisure the odious face of the wretch who causes my shame. I don't seem to know him.

LEL. (*aside*). Heavens! what do I see? And if it be my picture, what am I to believe?

SGA. (*not seeing LÉLIE*). Alas! poor Sganarelle! to what a sad fate is thy reputation doomed! Must

(*Perceiving LÉLIE observing him, he goes to the other side of the stage.*)

LEL. (*aside*). I cannot see, without alarm, this pledge of love gone from the fair hands to whom I gave it.

SGA. (*aside*). Must I be henceforward pointed at with two fingers? Must I have songs made about me, and at every turn be twitted with the scandalous disgrace, which a misbegotten wife has imprinted upon my forehead?

LEL. (*aside*). Am I mistaken?

SGA. (*aside*). Ah! shameless vagrant, to deceive me in the flower of my age, you, wife of a husband who may be reckoned handsome, must a young jackanapes, an accursed young malapert

LEL. (*aside, looking still at the portrait in SGANARELLE'S hands*). It is my portrait, there can be no doubt about it.

SGA. (*turns his back to him*). This man is very inquisitive.

LEL. (*aside*). What an extraordinary thing!

SGA. (*aside*). What is he about?

LEL. (*aside*). I must speak to him. (*aloud*) May I (SGANARELLE *goes farther off*.) I beg of you one word.

SGA. (*aside, going still farther*). What has he to tell me, now?

LEL. Might I inquire of you how this picture came into your hands?

SGA. (*aside*). Why does he wish to know? But now I think of it (*looking at LÉLIE, then at the portrait in his hand*) Oh! oh! I see; I now understand his anxiety! I no longer wonder at his surprise; this is my man, or rather my wife's man.

LEL. Pray, relieve my mind, and tell me how you came by

SGA. I know, sir, what troubles your mind, this portrait is your own; it was in the hands of a certain friend of yours; and I am not ignorant of the soft caresses that have taken place between the lady and you. I cannot tell if in this gallant adventure I have had the honour of being mentioned to your lordship, but anyhow from this time forward, oblige me by giving up an intrigue which a husband may not approve of; and remember that the sacred bonds of matrimony

LEL. What! She, say you, from whom you had this pledge

SGA. Is my wife, and I am her husband.

LEL. You have her in marriage?

SGA. Yes; but, marry, it's a marred marriage;* you know, sir, the occasion of it; I shall go at once and inform her relatives. (*Exit.*)

SCENE X.—LÉLIE (*alone*).

What do I hear! Then the report was true which gave her for husband the ugliest of all men. Alas! though your faithless lips had never sworn to me an undying love, one would think the very scorn of such a base and

* Oui, son mari, vous dis-je, et mari très-mari. The pun occurs several times in Shakespeare.

shameful choice might have secured your interest in my affection, and whatever wealth But this painful outrage after the fatigues of a long journey is too much for me, my heart throbs, my body seems to sink under me.

SCENE XI.—*The Wife of SGANARELLE, LÉLIE.*

WIFE OF SGA. (*thinking herself alone*). The cruel man, in spite of me (*seeing LÉLIE*) Sir, what is the matter with you? you are ill, I believe.

LÉL. A feeling of faintness has come over me suddenly.

WIFE OF SGA. I am afraid of your fainting in the street, come in here till you feel better.

LÉL. I will accept this kindness for a moment or two.

(*They enter the house.*)

SCENE XII.—SGANARELLE, A RELATIVE OF *his Wife*.

REL. I highly commend the anxiety of a husband in such a case; still you take fire a little hastily, and from all I have just heard you say against her, I cannot conclude that she is guilty. It is a very delicate subject, and we should never accuse any one of such a crime unless it be well proved.

SGA. You think that the evidence of one's own eyes will alone suffice.

REL. Too much haste would expose us to error. Do you know how this picture came into her hands, and if, after all, she knows the man? Try and inform yourself a little more carefully, and if it is as you believe, we shall be the first to punish her for her offence. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XIII.—SGANARELLE (*alone*).

He is right! No doubt the safest way is to proceed gently. I may have taken, without any foundation, all this vision of horror into my head, and the sweat may have stood upon my forehead without cause. In fact, this picture does not prove my dishonour a bit; let us try and discover

SCENE XIV.—SGANARELLE, *the Wife of SGANARELLE at the door of her house, with LÉLIE.*

SGA. (*aside, seeing them*). Ah! what do I see? What do I care now for portraits. Let me die, if this is not the man himself!

WIFE OF SGA. You are going away too soon, sir, and this faintness might return; stop a little while longer.

LEL. No, no, I must go; I cannot thank you enough for the kind assistance you have given me.

SGA. (*aside*). The deceitful woman affects even now to be merely polite to him. (*She goes in doors.*)

SCENE XV.—SGANARELLE, LÉLIE.

SGA. (*aside*). He sees me, I wonder if he will say anything.

LEL. Ah! with what feelings of anger the sight of this man . . . but I ought to condemn this unjust resentment, and accuse only my destiny for all the sorrows that have come upon me. Yet I may envy him his happiness. (*as he passes by SGANARELLE*) O too happy mortal in having so beautiful a wife!

SCENE XVI.—SGANARELLE, CÉLIE (*at her window, seeing LÉLIE go away*).

SGA. (*alone*). Anyhow, he does not mince matters! I feel as bewildered by this extraordinary outburst, as if horns had suddenly sprung upon my head! (*looking towards the side where LÉLIE went off*) Get you gone, get you gone: such conduct is not that of an honest man, I tell you.

CEL. (*aside, entering*). What does this mean? Lélie is here, I have just seen him! Why does he make a secret to me of his return?

SGA. (*without seeing CÉLIE*). "Oh! too happy mortal in having such a beautiful wife!" Ay! rather unhappy wretch to have for a wife a guilty woman who deceives me without remorse or pity; for her guilt is certain! And after such an outrage I suffer him to pass quietly by me,

to speak to me, and I stand here with folded arms like a henpecked old milksop! Why did I not knock off his hat, throw stones at him, bespatter his clothes with mud, and thus revenge myself bravely? Why did I not raise the hue and cry, and bring down the whole neighbourhood upon the robber of the honour of honest folk?

(During the speech of SGANARELLE CÉLIE comes towards him little by little, and waits till his outburst is over, before she speaks to him.)

CEL. *(to SGANARELLE)*. Sir, would you kindly tell me if you are acquainted with the young gentleman who has just spoken to you?

SGA. Alas! madam, it is not I who am acquainted with him; it's my wife.

CEL. You seem greatly agitated?

SGA. Do not think it is without cause; rather leave me to give full vent to my despair.

CEL. What sorrow can depress you so much?

SGA. What sorrow? Ah! it's no flea-bite! I defy any one to be happy under such circumstances. You see in me, madam, the most unfortunate of husbands; not only my joy and my honour, but my reputation is gone.

CEL. How is that?

SGA. That young fop, save your respect, has dishonoured me, and my own eyes have seen to-day his secret intercourse with my wife.

CEL. He who just now

SGA. Yes, yes, he himself. He adores my wife, and my wife adores him.

CEL. Ah! I felt sure that it was only for some base motive that he kept secret his return, and, from the first moment I saw him, I felt troubled to my very soul with sad forebodings.

SGA. You show too much kindness in thus taking my part; others are not so charitable, and many to whom I to-day related my disgrace, far from pitying me, seemed to think it a capital joke.

CEL. Can anything be more shameful than such a deed, and is there any punishment great enough for it? After having so far degraded himself, does he think himself fit to live? O Heavens! is it true?

SGA. Too true, indeed, for me.

CEL. Ah! cruel deceiver!

SGA. What a good-natured creature!

CEL. No, no, hell has no torment great enough for your crime!

SGA. How well she talks!

CEL. Thus to abuse innocence and goodness itself!

SGA. (*sighing aloud*). Ah!

CEL. A heart which never did anything to deserve the insult to which it is now exposed!

SGA. Yes, it is quite true.

CEL. Who, far from . . . but it is too much—how can this heart endure the thought without the deepest anguish!

SGA. My dear lady, do not vex your soul in that manner, my misfortune touches you too much, and it pierces me to the very soul to see and hear you.

CEL. But do not deceive yourself, and fancy that I shall rest satisfied with complaining: I know what is to be done in order to be revenged, and I shall not hesitate to do it. I shall go now; nothing shall dissuade me.

SCENE XVII.—SGANARELLE (*alone*).

Heaven keep her always out of harm's way! How kind of her to wish to avenge me! Yes, the anger that my disgrace excites in her bosom teaches me exactly what I ought to do. No one but a chicken-hearted fool would submit tamely to such an insult! I will go and hunt out the rascal who thus beards and insults me, and will show him that I have the courage to avenge my dishonour. I will teach you, pitiful coxcomb, to laugh at my expense and kiss my wife without my leave. (*after going forward three or four steps he comes back again.*) Yet, gently, the fellow looks as if he could get in a rage easily enough; he might, by adding injury to injury, decorate my back as he has decorated my forehead. I dislike those fiery tempers from the depth of my heart, and have great love for peaceable folk. I am not fond of beating, for I fear being beaten; and if I shine in anything, it is in my gentle disposition. On the other hand, honour says that such an

affront cannot be allowed to remain unpunished.—Let it say away as much as it will, I say the deuce take whoever listens to it! Suppose now I play the hero for once, and get as a reward an ugly piece of cold steel right through my bread-basket; when the news of my death spreads all over the town, I should like to know if you, my honour, will grow fat on that? The grave is too dismal an abode and too unwholesome for those who are afraid of the ague. All things considered, I think, as far as I am concerned, that I had rather be dishonoured and alive, than dead with honours thick upon me! What harm is there in it after all? Does it make a man's leg more crooked, or spoil his shape? Plague take him who first thought of afflicting his mind about such a fallacy, and of linking the honour of the most sober and steady man to whatsoever a fickle woman can do! Since, with good reason, every one is held responsible for his own misdeeds, why should our honour be held responsible in such a case? Why should we husbands be blamed for the sins of our wives? If they shamefully misbehave themselves without our leave, we men, forsooth, must bear all the blame. They commit the folly, and we are reckoned fools! It is a vile abuse, and the Government should remedy such a glaring injustice. Are there not already enough casualties in spite of all we can do; quarrels, lawsuits, hunger, thirst and sickness, to disturb the peace of our lives? Must we stupidly create for ourselves new causes for uneasiness, and torment our souls about sentimental griefs? Let us laugh at all this, despise these foolish fancies, and crush under foot all sighs and tears. If my wife has done wrong, let her weep; but why should I weep too, when I have done nothing amiss? At all events, I can comfort myself with the thought that I am not the only one in this plight. Many worthy people now-a-days see their wives courted, and take no notice. There, no, I will not go and pick a quarrel, for what is after all but a mere trifle. The world may call me fool for not avenging myself, but I should be a bigger fool to rush to my own destruction. Yet, I feel anger rising there (*putting his hand to his breast*), which would urge me to some manly action. Yes, my blood is up, I will revenge myself of the scoundrel, I will

be no coward! And to begin at once in the passion that transports me, I will go and tell everyone everywhere, that my wife deceives me. *(Exit.)*

SCENE XVIII.—GORGIBUS, CÉLIE, CÉLIE'S *Maid*.

CEL. Yes, father, I will submit to your will, you can dispose freely of my hand and my heart. I will sign the marriage-contract whenever you please, for I am now bent on performing my duty; I will master all my own inclinations and do whatever you order me.

GOR. Ah! now that is well said. Ecod! I am so beyond myself with joy that I would cut a caper on the spot, did I not know that there are people looking on who would laugh at me. Come, girl, come here and let me kiss you; there is no harm in that: a father can kiss his daughter when he pleases without giving any occasion for scandal. The pleasure of seeing you so dutiful will make me ten years younger. *(Exit.)*

SCENE XIX.—CÉLIE, CÉLIE'S *Maid*.

MAID. Such a change in you surprises me.

CEL. When you know what reasons make me act thus you will praise me for it.

MAID. That may be.

CEL. I will tell you—Lélie has deceived me! He has been here without

MAID. Here he comes.

SCENE XX.—LÉLIE, CÉLIE, CÉLIE'S *Maid*.

LÉL. Before I leave you for ever, I will at least reproach you here with

CEL. What! you dare speak to me! You have insolence enough for that!

LÉL. My insolence is great, for I feel that your choice is of such a nature, that I should be to blame to upbraid you. Live happy and contented, and laugh at the remembrance of me, with the worthy husband who is a crown of glory to your head.

CEL. Yes, faithless man, I will live happy; my most earnest wish is that the thought of my happiness may disturb your soul.

LEL. What just cause have I given you for such anger?

CEL. So you pretend to be surprised, and would ask, I suppose, for the particulars of your offence?

SCENE XXI. — CÉLIE, LÉLIE, SGANARELLE (*armed to the teeth*).

SGA. War, war to the death with this thief of my honour who without pity has sullied my reputation!

CEL. (*to LÉLIE whilst pointing to SGANARELLE*). Look, look, and do not answer me.

LEL. Ah! I see

CEL. Let this sight be enough to confound you.

LEL. Let it be sufficient rather to bring a blush of shame upon your cheeks.

SGA. (*aside*). My anger is up now, and will be doing. I feel as brave as a lion; and if I meet him there will be bloodshed. Yes, I have sworn that I will kill him; and die he shall Wherever I find him, I will dispatch him. (*drawing his sword half-way and approaching LÉLIE*). Right to the very centre of his heart I will give him

LEL. (*turning round*). Has anyone here offended you?

SGA. No, no; no one.

LEL. Why these arms?

SGA. It is a dress I put on to keep off the rain. (*aside*) Ah! what pleasure it would give me to kill him! Up, my courage

LEL. (*turning again*). Hey!

SGA. I didn't say anything. (*aside, striking himself to excite his courage*) Ah! coward that I am! Shame upon me, for a chicken-hearted poltroon!

CEL. (*to LÉLIE*). This object seems offensive to your sight, and must tell you enough, without my speaking.

LEL. You are right, I see by it that you are indeed guilty of the most inexcusable faithlessness that ever broke a lover's heart.

SGA. (*aside*). Why have I not a little more pluck?

CEL. Ah! deceiver! cease to speak to me in such an insolent manner!

SGA. (*aside*). Now, Sganarelle, you see that she has espoused your quarrel; courage, my lad, show a little firmness. Now, be bold! one noble effort, and kill him while his back is turned.

LEL. (*who has moved accidentally a few steps back, meets SGANARELLE, who was going towards him to kill him*). Since what I say makes you so angry, madam, I ought to show myself pleased with what your heart approves, and loudly applaud the noble choice you have made.

CEL. Yes, my choice is one that cannot be blamed.

LEL. You do well to try and defend it.

SGA. Yes, she does well to defend my rights. What you have done, sir, is not according to the laws. I have reason to complain; and if I were not so charitable, nothing less than death would satisfy me.

LEL. What have you to complain of? and what means your quarrelsome manner . . . ?

SGA. Ah! you know very well where the saddle galls me. Your conscience and the care of your own soul ought to tell you that my wife is my wife; and that to carry on your love before my very eyes is not acting like a good Christian.

LEL. Such a suspicion is base and ridiculous. Don't torment yourself with fears on that score. I know that she is yours, and far from . . .

CEL. How well, deceiver, you can dissemble!

LEL. What! do you imagine I entertain a single thought which need disturb his mind? Would you slander me by thinking me capable of such meanness?

CEL. Speak, speak to him, he can tell you . . .

SGA. No, no; you take my part much better than I could myself, and you treat this matter as it should be treated.

SCENE XXII.—CÉLIE, LÉLIE, SGANARELLE, SGANARELLE'S WIFE, CÉLIE'S *Maid*.

SGA.'S WIFE. I do not wish, madam, to show myself over jealous of you; but I am not your dupe, and I see

plainly what takes place. You may choose a wrong object, and you might be better employed than by seducing a heart which ought to be mine alone.

CEL. The avowal of her love is open enough.

SGA. Who sent for you, baggage? nobody wants you here; you come and scold her because she speaks for me, and you are afraid of losing your lover.

CEL. You need not fear, no one wants him here. (*turning to LÉLIE*) You see that truth will out; it is all I wished for.

LEL. What is the meaning of all this?

MAID. I am sure I don't know, and I wonder when we shall see the end of this twaddle. I have tried long enough to understand it, and the more I listen the less I seem able to make it out. I really must put in a word at last. (*placing herself between LÉLIE and CÉLIE*) Now, each in turn answer the questions I put to you. (*to LÉLIE*) What have you, sir, to reproach my mistress with?

LEL. That she has been faithless enough to leave me for another. That when I heard the rumour of her fatal marriage, I hastened hither—carried away by an irresistible love, which refused to believe that I could be forgotten—and that, on my arrival here, I found her married.

MAID. Married! and to whom?

LEL. (*showing SGANARELLE*). To him.

MAID. How, to him?

LEL. Yes, to him.

MAID. Who told you such a thing?

LEL. He himself to-day.

MAID (*to SGANARELLE*). Is this true?

SGA. I?—I told him I was married to my wife.

LEL. But just now I saw you looking at my portrait; you were in a great state of mind.

SGA. That is true; here it is.

LEL. You also told me that she from whose hands you received this pledge, was bound to you by the ties of matrimony.

SGA. Certainly (*showing his wife*). For I snatched it from her hands, and without it I should not have discovered her sin.

SGA.'S WIFE. What are you interrupting us for, with your silly accusations? I found it under my feet; and when, after your unjust outburst of temper, I brought into our house this gentleman who was nearly fainting in the street, I never even then noticed that it was his portrait that I had picked up.

CEL. It was I who caused this misunderstanding about the portrait, I let it fall in that swooning fit, when you (*to SGANARELLE*) so kindly carried me home.

MAID. You see that without my help you would still all be at loggerheads, and that you had need of my dose of hellebore.

SGA. (*aside*). Must I believe all this? Upon my word, my brows have had a narrow escape.

SGA.'S WIFE. But I am not quite satisfied yet, and however small may be the harm done, I am still afraid of being deceived.

SGA. (*to his wife*). Well, let us mutually trust one another, I risk more on my side than you do on yours; accept, without more ado, the solution proposed.

SGA.'S WIFE. Let it be, but look out for your head if I discover anything!

CEL. (*to LÉLIE after whispering together*). But if it is so, Lélie, what have I done? I have now everything to fear from having given way to my indignation. Yes, believing you to be false, I had recourse, to avenge myself, to the only means in my power: I promised obedience to my father, I engaged myself to be married to a man I abhor: and what most distresses me But I see my father coming.

LÉL. He shall keep his word to me.

SCENE XXIII.—GORGIBUS, CÉLIE, LÉLIE, SGANARELLE,
SGANARELLE'S *Wife*, CÉLIE'S *Maid*.

LÉL. Sir, you see me back, burning with the same intense love, and I long for the accomplishment of the promise by which you gave me the hope of having Célie for my wife.

GOR. Sir, whom I see back, burning with the same intense love, and who now longs for the accomplishment

of the promise by which I made you hope to have Célie for your wife, I am your lordship's most humble servant.

LEL. Sir! do you mean by this that you do not intend to keep your promise?

GOR. It is what I mean, sir, and by so doing I fulfil my duty towards my daughter; she, too, is ready to fulfil hers.

CEL. But my duty, father, compels me to make good your promise to him.

GOR. What! is it thus you obey my commands? Have you already forgotten the kindly feelings you showed me just now for Valère? you But here is his father, who certainly comes to make the final arrangements about the marriage.

SCENE XXIV.—VILLEBREQUIN, GORGIBUS, CÉLIE, LÉLIE, SGANARELLE, SGANARELLE'S Wife, CÉLIE'S Maid.

GOR. To what, sir, do we owe the pleasure of your visit?

VILL. To an important secret which was only revealed to me this morning, and which makes it utterly impossible for me to keep my word with you. My son, who was to marry your daughter, has deceived us all. He was married secretly to Lise, and has now been living for more than four months as her husband. Her family connection and her parents' fortune make it impossible for me to oppose that alliance, I come therefore

GOR. Not a word more, please. For if your Valère has engaged himself without your consent, I cannot hide from you that for a long while I myself promised Célie to Lélie, who, you know, is endowed with every virtue. His return to-day prevents me from accepting any other husband for my daughter.

VILL. I highly approve of your choice.

LEL. And by thus dealing honestly with me the happiness of my life is assured.

GOR. Let us, then, now go and settle the day for the wedding.

SGA. (*alone*). Had ever any man more reason than I to think himself treacherously deceived? By this you may see that the most striking evidence often creates in the mind but a false belief. Take this example to heart, and recollect that "seeing is not always believing."

DON GARCIA OF NAVARRE;

OR, THE JEALOUS PRINCE.

'DOM GARCIE DE NAVARRE' is a heroic-comedy in five acts, and in verse. It proved an utter failure, although Molière acted Dom Garcie. The piece contains some fine passages, and Molière seems to have had a particular liking for it. After he had vainly tried to make the public accept it, he made use of some parts of it in the 'MISANTHROPE,' 'LES FEMMES SAVANTES,' 'AMPHITRYON,' and 'LES FÂCHEUX.' It was only printed after his death.

It was first acted on the 4th of February, 1661, in the Théâtre du Palais Royal, opened for the first time in January of the same year.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

DON GARCIA, *Prince of Navarre, lover to ELVIRA.*

DON ALPHONSO, *Prince of Leon, supposed to be DON SILVIO,
Prince of Castile.*

DON ALVAREZ, *confidant of DON GARCIA, lover to ELIZA.*

DON LOPEZ, *another confidant of DON GARCIA, lover to ELIZA.*

DON PEDRO, *gentleman-in-waiting to INEZ.*

A Page.

DONNA ELVIRA, *Princess of Leon.*

DONNA INEZ, *Countess, in love with DON SILVIO, beloved by
MAUREGAT, usurper of the kingdom of Leon.*

ELIZA, *confidant to ELVIRA.*

*The scene is at Astorga, a city of Spain, in the kingdom
of Leon.*

DON GARCIA OF NAVARRE;

OR, THE JEALOUS PRINCE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—DONNA ELVIRA, ELIZA.

ELV. No, my inmost feelings were not ruled by any discrimination between the Prince and his rival, and if the former possesses my love, it is not because of the greater merit he may have. Don Silvio, as well as he, shows all the greatness of a true hero; equal in virtues, equal in birth, as they are, I for a long time hesitated between them, and my heart would yet have to name its conqueror, if merit alone could have influenced my decision. But it is from Heaven that come those chains that enthrall us, and although I esteem them both to the same extent, my heart is given entirely to Don Garcia.

EL. The love you feel for him has shown itself but little in your actions, and I for a long time doubted which of your two lovers was most favoured by you.

ELV. The love of these two noble rivals, Eliza, gave rise to many a painful struggle in my breast. When I dwelt on what I felt for the one, I saw no reason why I should restrain the tender inclinations of my heart; but as soon as the thought of sacrificing the other entered my mind, I reproached myself with my decision, saw its injustice, and felt that, after all, Don Silvio's love deserved a better fate. I then represented to myself the obligations which bind the daughter of the late king of Leon to the house of Castile, and I remembered the tried friendship which for so long has united the interests of his father and of mine. Thus in proportion as the Prince seemed to have established himself in my affection, did I lament the

ill-success of Don Silvio's ardent love, and, moved by pity, I seemed to yield to his sighs, and outwardly to agree with him in his wishes; thus I tried to make amends for the secret leanings of my heart.

EL. Yet, now that you have been informed of his previous passion, you should free yourself from such scruples. Before he fell in love with you, Donna Inez had received the homage of his heart. She told you her secret herself, and as she is your most intimate friend, you have a fair reason for rejecting his advances, and ready means of covering your refusal under the veil of friendship.

ELV. It is true that the news of Don Silvio's faithlessness ought greatly to relieve my mind, since it enables me to free myself from the tyranny of his affection and to bestow, without scruple, my love upon another. Yet, what joy can I feel when a weak and jealous prince accepts unworthily all the proofs of my love for him, and when at times I foresee some outbreak of my just indignation, and with it an end to all our intercourse?

EL. Since he has never heard from your own lips of your love for him, you cannot reproach him for his anxiety to know his fate; on the contrary, the attentions which have flattered his rival's hopes may justly make him doubtful of his happiness.

ELV. No, believe me, nothing can excuse the frenzy of his gloomy and distrustful jealousy; for my actions have too clearly shown what my feelings are towards him. The tongue is not the only unerring interpreter of our secret thoughts: a sigh, a look, a blush, silence itself is enough to betray the secret impulses of the heart. To a lover, the faintest dawn should speak as plainly as the unclouded light of day; the honour of our sex forbids us from showing openly all we feel. I have, I acknowledge, tried so to act as not to show any preference for either, but to see the merits of both with an impartial eye. But how vainly do we strive against our own inclination, and how easy it is for others to see the difference between our assumed love and that which springs from the heart! With the first everything is a task; with the other everything is done from impulse—like those pure and limpid streams which flow of themselves from their native

sources! In vain did my pity for Don Silvio strive to effect a change of feelings in my heart towards him, the effort was but too apparent; while in the misery of the struggle, my looks always told more to the Prince than I cared to disclose.

EL. Let us allow, if you like, that the suspicions of your illustrious lover are unfounded, still they afford a sure evidence of a heart deeply in love; and many would rejoice at what only gives you pain. Jealousy in a man whom we dislike may but increase our dislike; but in a man whom we love it should increase our love, for by it his feelings best show themselves. Since, then, in your heart a great and noble prince

ELV. Ah! do not bring forward such a strange maxim! Jealousy is at all times odious. Nothing can lessen the vileness of its unjust attacks; and the dearer the love is to us, the more do we feel the insult. To see a prince carried away by so baneful a passion; to see him losing every moment the respect he owes to the object of his love; to see him in his painful fits of jealousy quarrelling alike with her sorrow and with her joy; to see him explaining in favour of a rival all she does or says is too insulting! To you I speak plainly, Eliza: this constant suspicion offends me deeply. Don Garcia is very dear to me, and his love can awaken an answer in a heart worthy of his own. His bravery in Leon gave me a noble proof of his devotion, for, exposing himself to the greatest dangers, he rescued me from the hands of our base tyrants, forced this city from their grasp; and, by placing me within the shelter of its walls, saved me from the horrors of an ignominious marriage. Nor will I deny that I should be sorry to owe my deliverance to another, for there is something delightful in the feeling that we are indebted to those we love, and our otherwise timid affection is emboldened by the thought of being able to reward them. Yes, I rejoice that in hazarding his life for me he seems to have acquired a right of conquest. I rejoice that the danger I was in, threw me on his mercy. Ah! if the common reports be true, if Heaven should grant the return of my brother, my most ardent wishes are that Don Garcia may help him in the recovery of his throne from a perfidious

race, and that by successful deeds of heroic valour he may deserve all my gratitude. Yet, notwithstanding all this, if he continues to vex my soul, if his love be not purified from base jealousy, and ready for implicit trust, he in vain aspires to the possession of Elvira. Never will marriage join them; she would fear a union which could bring to both but the torments of hell upon earth.

EL. Whatever may be the feelings of the prince, it is his duty to sacrifice them to yours. Your desires are so clearly expressed in your letter that when he knows them

ELV. No, Eliza, after all, I had rather not make use of this letter; it will be better if I explain it all to him by word of mouth. It is always a dangerous thing to give into the hands of a lover a written proof of our attachment.—See, then, that the letter be not delivered to him.

EL. Your will is law to me, madam,—yet it is my constant wonder that Heaven should have made minds so different, and that what, according to some, is an insult, should by others be seen with pleasure. For my part, if I had a lover who could be jealous, I should rejoice in his uneasiness, and should esteem myself happy. It is a source of vexation to me to see in Don Alvarez a total absence of distrust.

ELV. We did not expect him to be so close at hand. Here he comes.

SCENE II.—DONNA ELVIRA, ELIZA, DON ALVAREZ.

ELV. Your return has taken us by surprise: what news do you bring? Is Don Alphonso coming? May we expect him?

ALV. Yes, madam. The time is come when your brother, brought up in Castile, is to regain possession of his throne, Hitherto Don Louis, to whose prudence the late king, on his death-bed, committed the care of Don Alphonso, has kept his rank secret from every one in order to save him from the fury of the traitor Mauregat. Often has the successful but cowardly tyrant inquired after the young prince, under pretence of restoring him to his

rightful place; but the cautious Don Louis has never accepted the dangerous bait. However, when he saw the people incensed at the violence which the base usurper would have offered you, the generous old man thought the time had come to try what could achieve the patient hope of twenty years. He has sounded Leon, and by his faithful emissaries has prepared the minds of both small and great. Whilst Castile was arming ten thousand men to restore the prince to a loyal people, he has caused his fame to be spread abroad, and will only let him appear at the head of an army, ready to launch the avenging thunder which is to crush the vile usurper. Leon is besieged, and Don Silvio in person commands the forces which his father lends you.

ELV. Such powerful aid may justly raise our hopes; I am only afraid that my brother may owe too great a debt of gratitude to Don Silvio.

ALV. But it is a strange thing that, notwithstanding the storm ready to burst over the head of the usurper, all the news from Leon confirm the announcement of his marriage with the Countess Inez.

ELV. He seeks to strengthen his cause by an alliance with that high-born lady. I have now heard nothing from her for a long time, and am anxious about her. I know, however, that she has always had a great aversion to the tyrant.

EL. She is under other engagements of honour and affection; she could not

ALV. The prince is coming.

SCENE III.—DON GARCIA, DONNA ELVIRA, DON ALVAREZ,
ELIZA.

GAR. I come to rejoice with you at the good news you have just heard. Your brother, while threatening with destruction a criminal usurper, inspires my ardent love with hope. Thanks to him a new career of glorious deeds opens before me, and I can expose myself once more to fresh perils for your sake! If Heaven be propitious, I shall gain a victory demanded by justice, lay treachery prostrate in the dust, and restore your family to its former

dignity. But what touches me most among these new-born hopes is that your brother is restored to you, to be king. Thus my love can openly declare itself, without fear of having wrong motives imputed to it, and without fear of being accused of trying to gain a crown through you. Yes, I wish it were possible for me to show the whole world that it is you, and you alone, I love. Many a time, if I may say so without offending you, have I rebelled against your high birth, many a time have I wished that a humbler lot had been the inheritance of your divine charms, so that my heart in offering itself might make up for the injustice of Heaven, and give you all that you now owe to the rank in which you were born. But since Heaven has refused me the happiness of thus proving my love, let me hope that the death I long to inflict on the tyrant will plead for me, and that my faithful services will favourably dispose towards me a brother and a whole nation.

ELV. I know, prince, that by espousing our cause you can make many glorious deeds speak in favour of your love. But this will not be sufficient to insure your success, Elvira would not be yours because of the gratitude of a nation and the favour of a brother; you have a greater obstacle to overcome.

GAR. Alas! I understand what you mean. I feel that my heart in vain sighs for you; and although you do not name the powerful obstacle, my heart knows but too plainly what it is.

ELV. We may misunderstand what we think we can clearly apprehend, and we often err through too much haste. Do you wish to hear how you will be sure to please me, and when you may safely entertain hope?

GAR. I should be grateful.

ELV. When you know how to love me as you ought.

GAR. Alas! madam, is there under heaven a love equal to the love which I bear to you?

ELV. When your love never gives her who inspires it reason to be offended.

GAR. Is not this my constant anxiety?

ELV. When you cease to harbour unworthy thoughts of me.

GAR. I honour you too much.

ELV. When your reason can conquer your unjust suspicions, and can banish from your breast the hideous monster which poisons your love—that jealous temper which prejudices me against your wishes, and arms me with righteous indignation against you.

GAR. Ah! it is true that, notwithstanding all the earnest efforts I may make, some remains of jealousy still cleave to my heart, and that thoughts of my rival, now at a distance from your lovely person, come at times to disturb the peace of my mind. Right or wrong, I cannot help fancying that you regret his absence, and that, in spite of my constant solicitude, your heart longs for him. Alas! if my fears offend you, it would be easy for you to remove them; I should be too happy to banish them for ever from my breast. But this, madam, depends more on you than on me. Yes, two words breathed with love would strengthen my heart against all jealous suspicions, and the burning light of such a glorious hope would dissipate all the gloom that distresses my soul. Deign, therefore, to remove the load that oppresses me; let a confession from your adorable lips give me that assurance which my doubts and fears tell me I am unworthy of.

ELV. Prince, your suspicions tyrannise over you. Nothing is so delightful as to find oneself readily understood, and our heart shrinks from the love which demands such open explanations. A discreet lover should remember and should trust the first instance in which our feelings are revealed to him; if he exacts more from us, he tempts us to retract what we have suffered him to hear. I cannot say, if my feelings left me the liberty of choice, which I should prefer, Don Silvio or you; but when I express a desire to see your jealousy cease, it seems to me that anyone but you would have understood the hint I give, and I really thought my request was made in such a way as to require no further explanation. Yet you are not satisfied, your love requires a bolder avowal. In order to clear all your doubts, I must say in so many words that I love you; perhaps even this may fail in satisfying you, and you may insist upon my swearing it.

GAR. Say no more; I own I ask too much, I ought to

acquiesce in all your wishes. I will require no further explanation; I believe that I am not altogether indifferent to you, that you do not see my love without some feeling of compassion, and that I am more fortunate than I deserve to be. Henceforth I renounce all jealous suspicions. I feel the justice of the sentence which condemns them, and I bow my head in obedience to the gentle rebuke. I will free my heart from their unjust tyranny.

ELV. You promise a great deal, prince, and I very much doubt if you will have such power over yourself.

GAR. Ah! believe it, a promise made to you must be sacred, and the delight of obeying you renders everything possible. May heaven declare eternal war against me; may its thunder strike me dead at your feet; or what would be worse still than death, may your indignation be poured upon me, if ever my love is weak enough to fail in the duty of keeping such a promise, and if any jealous transport makes me (DON PEDRO enters and presents a letter to DONNA ELVIRA.)

ELV. (to DON PEDRO). I was very anxious, and you are welcome. Tell the messenger to wait. (*aside*) How his looks betray his feelings! this letter disturbs him already. How tenacious is his jealousy! (*aloud*) What stops you, prince, in the middle of your oath?

GAR. I thought you had something to say to each other, and my fear of disturbing you

ELV. Methinks your tone of voice is much altered, and the expression of your face strangely wild! I cannot but be surprised at such a sudden change. May I ask the cause?

GAR. A sickness at heart has all at once seized me.

ELV. Such sickness is at times more dangerous than it seems, and you should seek some prompt remedy. But yet, tell me, are the attacks frequent?

GAR. They seize me at intervals.

ELV. Ah! weak-minded man! Let this letter cure you; your mind only is diseased.

GAR. This letter? No, my hand refuses to touch it! I see what you mean, I see of what you accuse me. If

ELV. Read it, I beg of you, and be convinced.

GAR. And then you will call me weak, jealous. No, no, I earnestly declare to you that this letter has given me no uneasiness. To justify myself in your eyes, I refuse to avail myself of your permission.

ELV. If you persist in your refusal, I should be wrong to insist, it is enough that I have asked you to see whose writing it is.

GAR. I ought to bend to your wishes ; if you wish me to read it to you I will obey.

ELV. Yes, yes, prince, read it for me.

GAR. It is only in obedience to your desire, and I can say

ELV. Give what reason you like, but read it at once.

GAR. It comes from Donna Inez, I see.

ELV. Yes, and I am glad of it, both for your sake and mine.

GAR. (*reads*). *In spite of my open contempt, the tyrant loves me still. Since you left me he seems to employ all the power and violence, which he till now used in seeking to unite you to his son, to the task of making me yield to his wishes. All those to whom I owe obedience, influenced by motives of false honour, approve the shameful marriage. I know not how long the torture will continue, but I will die rather than consent. May you, fair Elvira, be happier than your suffering*

INEZ.

Her heart is endowed with great courage.

ELV. I will go and write an answer to my noble friend. Meanwhile, prince, learn to conquer the perverse bent of your mind, and be not so ready to take alarm. I have to-day purposely calmed your rising anxiety, and your trouble has passed off easily enough, but remember that there are times when I should be less inclined to be forbearing.

GAR. What, do you really believe !

ELV. I am afraid I must believe it. Adieu. Remember the advice I have given you, and if your love for me is really as great as you pretend, prove it by yielding me obedience.

GAR. Believe that henceforth I shall have no other wish, and that I will rather lose my life than fail in obedience.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—ELIZA. DON LOPEZ.

EL. If I may speak freely, I must say that I do not much wonder at what the prince may do. When a man is entirely under the sway of an overpowering love, it is not strange that jealousy should sometimes trouble his heart and that frequent doubts should mar his happiness; it is to me but too natural, and I feel for him. But what surprises me, Don Lopez, is to know that you encourage his suspicions; to hear that it is you who are the author of them; that in his love for Donna Elvira, he is only jealous through you, only disturbed by the care you take not to undeceive him. Yes, Don Lopez, I repeat that I do not wonder at the fears and suspicions of a man whose whole soul is engrossed by a passionate love; but that a man without being in love should feel all these anxieties, is to me a novelty which in you I see for the first time.

LOP. Let every one comment on my conduct as he pleases; it is regulated by the aim I have in view; and since you rejected my love, my study has been how best to make my court to the prince.

EL. But are you not conscious that he will succeed but ill in his suit, if you nurse these feelings in him?

LOP. And pray was it ever known, charming Eliza, that those about princes cared for anything but their own interests? Did ever a perfect courtier think that he would be called to swell the retinue of the great by being a censor of their faults? Did he ever disturb himself about what might be to them the consequences of what he says, provided he could only better his own fortune? No; his only thought is to find the shortest way to win their favour; and there is no better way than to flatter their weaknesses, by applauding blindly all they do, and by never dwelling for a moment on what might displease them. Wholesome advice makes him importunate, and deprives him of the confidence which is at once granted to him when he makes use of artful compliance. In short, you will see that everywhere, the art of courtiers is to profit by the foibles

of the great, to cherish their errors, and never to give them advice contrary to their seeming wishes.

EL. No doubt these maxims may succeed for a time ; yet there are such things as reverses of fortune ; a ray of light may at last find its way into the mind of the deceived, who will avenge upon the flatterers the inglorious blindness they have taken no pains to destroy. I must also add that you speak rather openly of the tactics you employ, and that if your noble motives were laid before the prince, they would but ill promote the end you have in view.

LOP. Besides having it in my power to deny all my frank speeches, I know very well that you are too discreet to reveal my confidential talk with you. After all, what have I said that is not known to everybody ? What in my proceedings have I to conceal ? If I employed treachery, I might fear a downfall ; but what have I to dread when I can only be accused of a little complaisance, and of falling in with the disposition of the prince to jealousy ? His soul seems to live upon suspicions, and I make it my study to feed his uneasiness, and to seek on all sides some subject for a secret conversation. When I can bring him some news which is sure to give a deadly blow to his peace of mind, it is then that he loves me most ; I see him eagerly drinking in the poison, and thanking me for it, as if I had brought him the news of some great victory, which would for ever reflect glory and happiness on his life. But I see my rival coming, I leave you to each other, for, although I have given up all hopes of possessing you, I should feel pained to see you show your preference for him before my face ; I had rather, if possible, escape such humiliation.

EL. You do right, all prudent lovers should act thus.

(*Exit DON LOPEZ.*)

SCENE II.—DON ALVAREZ. ELIZA.

ALV. The tidings have come at last that the king of Navarre has declared himself in favour of the prince, and that a reinforcement of troops is ready to join the army

to be employed in the service of Elvira. I am surprised at the quickness of their movements. But

SCENE III.—DON GARCIA, ELIZA, DON ALVAREZ.

GAR. Is the princess engaged?

EL. She is writing some letters, I believe, my lord, but I will let her know that you are here.

GAR. I will wait until she has finished.

(*Exit ELIZA and DON ALVAREZ.*)

SCENE IV.—DON GARCIA (*alone*).

As the time of seeing her draws near, I feel overpowered by an unusual emotion, both fear and resentment make me tremble. Ah! Don Garcia, beware lest a false alarm lead you to the brink of some dark abyss; lest the bewildering thoughts of your mind tend to make you believe too easily the testimony of your senses. Consult your reason; take it alone for guide, see whether your suspicions are really well founded, and do not despise their warning voice. And at the same time do not suffer them to take too much empire over you, and leave you helpless to moderate your first outburst. I will read again carefully this half of the torn letter. Alas! unhappy man that I am, what would I not give for the remainder! But, no, of what use after all would it be? Is not this sufficient to convince me of my misfortune! (*reads*).

*Although your rival
yet you ought
for you possess within yourself
the greatest obstacle which
I have deep feelings
for having rescued me
but you are hateful
Take, then, from your heart
show yourself worthy
and now that my only
do not let your obstinacy"*

Yes, it is enough, my fate is sealed; her heart as well as

her hand is clearly legible here; and this fatal letter, imperfect as it is, but too plainly reveals its meaning to me. Nevertheless, I will act with prudence, and will hide my resentment from her for a while. I will give her no clue to what has come into my hands, but will make use of her own arts to bring her treachery to light. She is coming; may my reason help me to hide with a show of calmness the anger which is ready to burst forth.

SCENE V.—DONNA ELVIRA. DON GARCIA.

ELV. It was kind of you to wait so long for me.

GAR. (*aside*). Ah! how well she dissembles.

ELV. We have just now heard that the king your father approves of your intentions, and consents that you should restore us to our subjects; the news has greatly rejoiced my heart.

GAR. And I have experienced equal joy; but

ELV. The tyrant will no doubt find it difficult to save himself from the storm which is ready to burst upon him; and I feel certain that the same courage which delivered me from his savage anger and placed me in safety in the fortress of Astorga (wrested from his hands), will achieve the conquest of Leon, and end the rule of the tyrant.

GAR. A few days will decide. But, I pray you, let us speak on another subject. May I dare to ask you, madam, to whom you have written since last I saw you here?

ELV. Why this question? Why do you wish to know?

GAR. It is pure curiosity, madam.

ELV. Curiosity is the daughter of jealousy.

GAR. No; jealousy has nothing to do with my question, for have you not commanded me to banish it from my mind.

ELV. Without inquiring further into the reasons that urge you, know that I have written twice to the Countess at Leon and twice to the Marquis Don Louis, at Burgos. Will this answer suffice?

GAR. You have written to no one else, madam?

ELV. No, I have not.—But your question surprises me.

GAR. I beseech you, think well before you answer me; one may perjure oneself through forgetfulness.

ELV. The words of my mouth are truth.

GAR. Strange truth!

ELV. Prince!

GAR. Princess!

ELV. What can have called forth such an insult? Have you lost all sense and judgment?

GAR. Yes, when on seeing you I drank in the poison which is killing me; yes, when like a fool I thought I had found some sincerity in those treacherous charms that have deceived me!

ELV. Of what treachery are you complaining?

GAR. Ah! false heart, how well you feign ignorance! But I will leave you no loophole of escape! Look at your own handwriting! Need I see the rest to know to whom you use such words.

ELV. (*after reading*). So this is the cause of your strange outburst?

GAR. And you do not blush at the sight?

ELV. There is no occasion for innocence to blush.

GAR. It is true that innocence is here greatly oppressed; you disown this letter because it is not signed . . .

ELV. Why should I disown it when it is mine?

GAR. At least it is something gained, to see you frank enough not to deny it. But I suppose you will add, and I shall be called upon to endorse what you say, that such a letter could only be written to some indifferent person, or else that the tender sentiments it contains were only meant for one of your lady friends or relatives.

ELV. No, it was written to a lover; and I will even say more, to one greatly beloved.

GAR. And may I, deceitful . . . ?

ELV. Refrain, unworthy prince, from giving way to your ignoble temper. Although I do not recognize in you any right over my heart, and owe obedience to none here, yet for your own confusion I will clear myself from the baseness you so insolently impute to me. You shall be enlightened, do not doubt it; I have my defence at hand; and my innocence will fully appear. You shall be the

judge in your own cause, and be forced to pronounce your own sentence.

GAR. I fail to understand your meaning.

ELV. You will soon understand me; and may it be to your shame! Eliza

SCENE VI.—DON GARCIA, DONNA ELVIRA, ELIZA.

EL. Madam.

ELV. (*to* DON GARCIA). At least, observe carefully whether I try in any way to deceive you; whether by any glance, any warning gesture, I give her to understand what I want of her. (*to* ELIZA) Answer me at once, what did you do with the letter I wrote a short while ago? Where did you leave it?

EL. Madam, I must own that I am greatly to blame. I hardly know how it came to pass, for I left it on my table. I have just now been informed that Don Lopez coming into my apartment, with the indiscretion he is addicted to, began at once to ransack everything, and that, seeing the letter, he laid hands upon it. He was unfolding it to read it, when Leonora tried to snatch it out of his hand, and it was torn into two pieces. In spite of all her protestations, Don Lopez went away at once with one half.

ELV. Have you the other half with you?

EL. Yes, madam, here it is.

ELV. Give it to me. (*to* DON GARCIA) Now we shall see who deserves to be blamed. Join the two pieces together, read it aloud, and distinctly, for I also wish to hear it.

GAR. (*reads*). *To the prince* DON GARCIA. Ha!

ELV. Go on, is the beginning enough to stop you?

GAR. (*reads*).

*Although your rival, prince, disturbs your peace of mind,
yet you ought to fear your own heart more than him,
for you possess within yourself wherewith to destroy
the greatest obstacle which your love has met with.*

*I have deep feelings of gratitude to you
for having rescued me from the hands of the tyrant;
but you are hateful to me, insomuch as you are jealous.*

Take, then, from your heart all that remains of distrust;

show yourself worthy of the love you have inspired, and now that my only desire is to see you happy, do not let your obstinacy thwart my endeavours to make you so.

ELV. May I know what you say to this?

GAR. Ah! madam; what can I say? I am confounded. No punishment is great enough for my odious injustice.

ELV. Be it so. Know that if I just now desired you to read this letter, it was for the purpose of contradicting all that is written in it. Farewell.

GAR. Ah! whither are you going?

ELV. Wherever you are not; your jealousy is hateful to me.

GAR. I beseech you, forgive a miserable lover rendered guilty towards you through a most unfortunate accident, and who, however wrong he may seem, would have deserved greater blame had he felt no anxiety. Can one deeply in love never feel doubt in his joy? Would you have believed in my tenderness for you, if this fatal letter had not brought consternation to my heart; if I had not shuddered before the blow which I imagined was to destroy all my happiness. Tell me if any true lover would not have been deceived as I was? Tell me if it was possible not to believe such a proof?

ELV. Yes, it was possible; you knew well enough my feelings toward you; that knowledge should have mastered your suspicions. Another in your place would have withstood the testimony of the whole world.

GAR. The less deserving we are of a promised happiness, the more difficult it is for us to believe in it. The expectation of a glorious destiny leaves free room for many a fear. I felt myself so little worthy of your love that I disbelieved the possibility of my presumptuous hopes being realised. I thought that here, in my dominions, you esteemed it right to show yourself kindly disposed towards me, and that disguising your feelings of contempt which

ELV. I condescend to such contemptible baseness! I make use of shameful deceit! I act from motives of servile fear! I be untruthful to my own feelings, and because I am in your power make use of a counterfeit

love to hide from you my contempt! Honour must indeed have small power over my soul. You can think such a thing, and dare to say it to me! Know that my heart cannot debase itself, and that nothing could force it to act thus. If I committed a mistake in showing you some marks of an affection of which you are unworthy, I will now show you the hatred you excite in me. I am in your power, but I defy your anger, and will prove to you that my heart is incapable of cowardice.

GAR. Yes, I am wrong, I acknowledge, but let me beg for forgiveness; I ask it in the name of the most ardent love that ever divine charms kindled in a human breast. Ah! if your wrath cannot be appeased, if my crime is too great ever to be forgiven; if you do not take into consideration either the love that caused it or the deep repentance which follows it, I must escape from torments I cannot endure by putting an end to my life! No! think not that I can live for one moment under your displeasure! Already the time seems too long, my heart fails me under its gnawing remorse! The cruel wounds of a thousand vultures could not inflict such mortal pangs. You have but to speak, but to tell me if there is no hope of forgiveness for me, and my sword with a welcome thrust will soon, in your presence, pierce the heart of the most miserable of men; this heart, this traitorous heart, whose perplexing fears have so grossly insulted your goodness! Too happy shall I be in my death, if it cancels in your mind the remembrance of my crime, and leaves, unmixed with your feelings of aversion, a weak remembrance of my affection for you! It is the last favour my love asks of you.

ELV. Ah! too cruel prince!

GAR. Speak, madam, speak.

ELV. Must I still . . . ought I to look upon you again with kind feelings, after you have insulted me with such base suspicions?

GAR. He who loves cannot offend: the faults caused by love are by love excused.

ELV. Love cannot be the excuse for such outbursts.

GAR. The stronger it is, the more difficult it is to control its passion, and . . .

ELV. No, speak no more of it; you deserve all my hatred.

GAR. You hate me?

ELV. I try to. But alas! I fear that all the indignation your offence has caused will hardly carry my vengeance so far. My efforts are vain.

GAR. Do not think of so great a punishment! Since I offer to die to avenge you, say the word and you will be obeyed.

ELV. One who cannot hate, can still less wish to kill.

GAR. But I cannot live, unless you forgive me; decide between forgiveness and my death.

ELV. Alas! you see too well what my decision is; to tell a criminal that we cannot hate him, is it not to pardon him?

GAR. Ah! this is too much, suffer me, adorable princess

ELV. Forbear. I blame myself for such weakness. (*Exit.*)

GAR. (*alone*). At last I am

SCENE VII.—DON GARCIA, DON LOPEZ.

LOP. My lord, I come to inform you of a secret that may justly alarm your love.

GAR. Speak not to me of secrets and alarms now that I am transported with happiness! After what I have just seen, I can never again give way to suspicion; after the supreme goodness of my noble mistress, I ought to shut my ears for ever against all idle reports! Let me hear no more of them.

LOP. I bow to your wishes, my lord. Your interests are my only care. I thought that the secret I have just discovered was of sufficient importance to be communicated to you at once; but since it is your will that I should keep it to myself, let us change the subject of conversation. I have other news. Every noble family in Leon has already thrown off the mask on the approach of the troops from Castile, and the people especially show such affection for the true king that the tyrant trembles.

GAR. Castile shall not, however, be victorious alone, for we will endeavour to share her glory. We have also

troops able to strike terror into the heart of Mauregat. But what is that secret you wish to communicate to me?

LOP. My lord, I have no secret to tell.

GAR. Speak, I give you full leave.

LOP. I cannot, my lord; I fear I might displease you, and it is better for me to learn how to be silent.

GAR. Speak, I command you.

LOP. I have no alternative but to obey your commands. But, my lord, prudence forbids that I should divulge such a secret in this place. Let us go elsewhere, I will then speak freely; you can form your own judgment upon my simple statement.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—DONNA ELVIRA, ELIZA.

ELV. What do you say, Eliza, to such a strange weakness, that I, a princess, should so quickly forget all my resentment, and after all I said, I should suffer my courage to fail, and weakly forgive his cruel insult!

EL. I know, madam, that an outrage from one we love is very hard to bear; yet if nothing can exasperate us so much, there is nothing we so easily forgive. The offender, however guilty, pleading for forgiveness at our feet, is sure to triumph over our most bitter anger; how much more when the offence is but an excess of love! Whatever pain the prince may have given you, I do not wonder that you should forgive him, and I know well what power, in spite of all you can threaten, will always make you pardon such faults in him.

ELV. Ah! be sure that whatever may be the strength of my love for the prince, he has forced me to blush for the last time. If in future he gives me cause for anger, he may in vain hope for pardon. If I am inclined to love him still, I will bind myself by an oath never to give way to him. A heart with the smallest pride is ashamed not to keep a promise, and, whatever it may suffer, it will sacrifice everything to the noble pride of keeping its word. Therefore do not judge of the future by the past, and,

whatever fortune may have in store for me, believe that I never shall belong to the Prince of Navarre unless he cures himself thoroughly of those gloomy fits which darken his understanding, and unless he convinces me that my heart will never again have to dread such insults.

EL. But what insult do you find in the jealousy of a lover?

ELV. There is nothing that deserves our indignation so much. Since it requires so great an effort for us to speak our love; since the honour of our sex so strictly forbids such a confession; should the lover who sees us conquer such obstacles for his sake think lightly of that testimony, and yet go unpunished? Is he not to blame if he does not trust what we have confessed with so much reluctance?

ELV. For my part, I think that a little distrust in a lover has nothing that should offend me; on the contrary, I consider it more dangerous that he should feel too confident of the possession of my heart, and of his power over me.

ELV. Let us argue no more, we shall not agree. Such proceedings wound my heart, and in spite of myself I foresee that some day there will be a final quarrel between the prince and me; and that, whatever may be the virtues which shine forth . . . O heavens! the Prince Don Silvio of Castile!

SCENE II.—DONNA ELVIRA, DON ALPHONSO (*thought to be*
DON SILVIO), ELIZA.

ELV. My lord! what chance brings you here?

ALPH. I know, madam, that my coming must surprise you; it did not occur to you that I could so easily enter this town—the access to which is rendered difficult through a rival's orders—without being discovered by his soldiers. But I only surmounted a few obstacles, whereas the desire of seeing you might have worked miracles. Yes, deprived of your presence, my sufferings were so great that I could no longer resist the wish of passing a few moments in secret near you. I also wished to tell you of my gratitude to Heaven for having saved you from the hands of an

odious tyrant. Yet, even in the midst of my happiness, it is a subject of eternal regret to me to know that fate has offered to my rival, and not to me, the honour of thus serving you. Yes, I was as anxious as he could be to break your chains, and the victory could equally have been mine, if Heaven had not robbed me.

ELV. I know, my lord, that your heart could overcome the greatest dangers; and I doubt not that the generosity which urges you to take up my cause would have saved me from my enemy's unworthy schemes, and have done for me all that another has done. But I owe already enough to Castile. It is well known what the Count your father did for the late king, and how firm a friend he was of his. It is well known how, after having helped him to the last, he gave to my brother a safe retreat in his dominions. For full twenty years now, he has sheltered him against the cowardly attacks of his enemies; and, in order to restore him to the splendour of a crown, you, his son, are marching in person against our usurpers. Is not this enough? And do not these generous efforts raise in my heart sufficient gratitude towards you? Would you wish, my lord, to be the arbitrator of my whole destiny? Must I never receive a kindness but through your hands? Ah! in the midst of perils to which a cruel destiny exposes me, suffer that another should also lend us the help of his courage, and do not complain if his arm has achieved glory where you were not.

ALPH. Yes, I ought to cease complaining, you press the duty upon me only too kindly; besides, why should I complain of one sorrow when there exists another more grievous to bear. This succour which my rival was able to give you, is a great mortification to me; but, alas! it is not the greatest of my misfortunes: the cruel blow which wounds me to the heart is to see my rival preferred by you. I see that his love, crowned with glory, triumphs in your heart over mine, but I feel that the opportunity of showing his courage and of gaining the brilliant victory which was destined to save you, are only due to the happiness of pleasing you, and to the secret power which gives victory where your wishes are fixed. As for me, all my endeavours will be in vain. It is true that I am

leading an army against your proud tyrants, but I march with trembling, for I know that your good wishes are not with me, and that, if what you look for comes to pass, the happiness of yet more glorious successes will be for my rival. Ah! madam, why am I to be hurled from the exalted height I had dreamt of? What are the crimes by which I may have deserved such a fearful downfall?

ELV. Ask nothing from me before you have considered well what you should require of my heart. As for this coldness, which seems to pain you, I leave it to you to answer for me. For you cannot be ignorant that I know some of the secrets of your soul; I believe you too noble and too generous to desire me to do what is wrong. Tell me—is it just that I should reward an act of faithlessness? and can you offer to me, without the utmost injustice, a heart which you have already offered to another? Are you right to complain of my refusal to listen to your vows, when I prevent you from bringing dishonour upon your noble fame by committing a crime? Yes, my lord, a crime; for a first love has such sacred rights over a noble heart, that rather than yield to a second, we should renounce greatness and even life itself. I feel for you the deep esteem due to great courage and to a magnanimous heart; but do not ask of me what I could not give you; and be true to your first choice. Although she knows of your new feelings, see with what tenderness she still clings to her love for you; see how she has rejected the greatest offers for the sake of an ungrateful lover—for you are ungrateful, my lord. Consider how, because of her love for you, she generously refused the splendour of a diadem! See to how many dangers she has been exposed for your sake, and render to her heart what is due to it.

ALPH. Ah! madam, do not remind me of her virtues! they are but too present to the ungrateful heart which abandons her, and if I were to tell you all I feel for her, I fear I should not seem innocent towards you. Yes, I pity her in spite of the all-absorbing love which brings me to your feet! Never did a ray of hope in my love for you enthral my soul without extorting for her a sigh of regret, without reminding me of the first raptures caused by her, my first love; without making me reproach myself

for the attraction your divine charms exercise over me, and without mingling remorse with my dearest wish. Nay, since I must tell you all, I have done more than suffer all this; I have endeavoured to wrestle with my love for you, to break your chains, and to bring again my heart under the gentle sway of its first conqueror. But it is all in vain, my constancy must yield to the power that destroys me. Were my whole life to be made wretched, I cannot renounce your love. I cannot bear the terrible thought of seeing you possessed by another; the same sun which shines on your beauty will see my death before that moment arrives. I know that I forsake a true-hearted princess; but after all, madam, am I guilty? What liberty is left to a mortal attracted by your divine charms? Alas! I am more to be pitied than she is; she loses but a faithless lover; such a sorrow should soon be forgotten; while I, by an unparalleled misfortune, feel forced to abandon a gracious lady, and to suffer besides all the torments of a rejected love.

ELV. You have no torments but those you choose to create for yourself, for our heart is always in our power. It is true that at times we feel its weakness, but in the end reason, the master

SCENE III.—DON GARCIA, DONNA ELVIRA, DON ALPHONSO
(*thought to be DON SILVIO*).

GAR. Madam, I see too well that my presence interrupts your conversation very inopportunistically; to say the truth, I was not aware that I should find such good company.

ELV. I am as much surprised as you can be, prince; and I, no more than you, expected Don Silvio's visit.

GAR. I believe it, madam, since you say so. (*to DON SILVIO*) But you, my lord, why not forewarn us of this honour? why not give us notice of the pleasure we were to expect, and allow us to pay you the respect due to you in this place?

ALPH. My lord, you are so taken up with warlike cares that I thought it wrong to interrupt you; the lofty

thoughts of mighty conquerors stoop but with dislike to the common civilities of life.

GAR. But the mighty conquerors whose warlike cares you are pleased to notice, far from loving secrecy prefer an array of witnesses. Their souls, trained to great deeds from infancy, court the light of day, and, always guided by lofty motives, never condescend to disguise. Do you not endanger the renown of your noble virtues by using secret means of penetrating into this place, and are you not afraid that people will judge this action as unworthy of you?

ALPH. I know not if the secrecy I have used in this visit will be blamed, but this I know, prince, that I have never courted obscurity in those undertakings that required light. Were I to undertake aught against you, you would have no reason to fear a surprise. I would warn you of it in good time, and leave you no excuse for not responding to my call. But for the present let us conquer all hasty passions, and let us not forget in whose presence we are.

ELV. (to DON GARCIA). You are wrong, prince, and his visit is such that you . . .

GAR. Ah! madam, it is too much for you to espouse his quarrel, and since you were, you said, ignorant of his coming, you should teach your heart better how to dissemble. Your quickness in defending him is but a strange proof of his having taken you by surprise.

ELV. Believe what you will; it is of so little importance to me, that I do not even care to deny your accusation.

GAR. Continue your heroic pride; fear not to lay bare your whole heart; dissimulate no longer; why should you unsay all you have said before. Speak! speak! lay aside all restraint, say that you are moved by his love, that for you his presence has such charm . . .

ELV. And if I wish to love him, can you prevent me? Have you any right over my heart? and must it wait for your leave to regulate its desires? Know that too much pride has deceived you, if you think you have any authority over my soul; know that my feelings proceed from too pure a source for me to wish to conceal them when

I am asked to declare myself. I will not tell you whether I love the count, but be sure of this, that he has my greatest esteem; his noble virtues, which I admire, make him more deserving than you of a princess's love. Yes, I deeply value his attentions and his care; and if a stern law forbids that I should ever be his, at least it is in my power to assure him that I shall never belong to you. Therefore, bid farewell to all idle expectations. I have spoken, and I will keep my word. You wished me to give utterance to my thoughts; I have done so; are you content? Is my explanation sufficient for you? Consider if, in order to remove some dark suspicion, there are not other points on which I can throw light? (*to DON SILVIO*) But in the meanwhile, if you still wish to retain my esteem, remember, Count, that I fully rely upon your assistance, and that, whatever may be the provocations you may receive, we have need of your arm to punish our tyrants. Shut your ears against all he may tell you in his frenzy; remember who it is that asks this of you.

(*Exit.*)

SCENE IV.—DON GARCIA, DON ALPHONSO (*thought to be DON SILVIO*).

GAR. You triumph, and your soul proudly enjoys my confusion. It is a pleasant thing to hear a full confession, telling us of our victory over a rival, but our joy is greatly enhanced by our rival being present to hear that confession; my hopes, thus haughtily crushed, are illustrious trophies wherewith to crown your success. Let your soul taste deeply its cup of happiness, but beware lest its hopes be never realised. I am too justly incensed, and many things may yet come to pass. Once let loose, despair knows no bounds, and everything is justifiable to him who has been deceived. If the faithless princess, to flatter your love, has even now given her word never to be mine, perhaps my indignation will find means to prevent her from ever being yours.

ALPH. I fear not the obstacles you may oppose to me. We shall, ere long, know who has hoped in vain; each of us will be able by his valour either to defend his happi-

ness or to avenge his misfortunes. But as between rivals it is difficult even for the most calm to avoid bitter words, and as I on my part should be sorry if our conversation caused anger to either of us, give me means of leaving this place, and thus end the painful self-restraint to which I am subjected.

GAR. Nay; do not fear that I shall compel you to violate the command you have received. However just may be my wrath (wrath flattering to your pride), I know the fitting time for it to show itself. You are at liberty, Count. Leave us, proud of the advantages you have obtained; but remember that my death alone can complete your conquest.

ALPH. When the time comes, fortune and the success of our arms shall decide our destinies.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—DONNA ELVIRA, DON ALVAREZ.

ELV. Leave me, Don Alvarez, and give up all hope of ever persuading me to forget this offence. The wound is too deep, and all your endeavours only tend to make it more painful. Does the prince think, forsooth, that his false protestations of respect will make me yield? No, no; he has provoked my indignation too much, and his useless repentance which has brought you hither, solicits a pardon he shall never obtain.

ALV. Madam, he deserves your pity! Never was offence expiated with deeper remorse; if you could witness his grief, it would touch your heart, and you would forgive him. The prince is at an age when a man follows the first movements of his heart, and when passion leaves little room for reflection. Don Lopez, deceived by a false report, was the cause of his master's mistake. It was said concerning the count's secret visit that you had connived at it. The prince believed this rumour, was carried away by the strength of his love, and under its influence deeply grieved you. But he now acknowledges his error, he feels

that you are innocent; his first care in dismissing Don Lopez shows plainly his deep sense of remorse for having offended you.

ELV. He too readily believes in my innocence, he cannot as yet be quite sure of it: tell him to weigh all things carefully, and not to make too much haste lest he be imposed upon.

ALV. Madam, he is well assured

ELV. It is enough; I must beg of you, Don Alvarez, not to persist in a discussion which is painful to me: it revives in me a sorrow which is most inopportune at a time that a greater trouble weighs upon my heart. The reported death of the illustrious countess has filled my mind with such sadness, that there is in me no room left for other grief.

ALV. It may be, madam, that these tidings are not true; but the news which I have to take to the prince is very cruel in its certainty.

ELV. However great his sufferings, they are less than he deserves. *(Exit ALVAREZ.)*

SCENE II.—DONNA ELVIRA, ELIZA.

EL. I waited, madam, till he was gone to tell you something that will relieve your surprise about Donna Inez's fate, since it is in your power to know at once what has become of her. A person who wishes to remain unknown, has sent a messenger to ask audience of you in order to tell you all.

ELV. Eliza, I must see him; let him come quickly.

EL. Only, madam, he seems bent upon being seen by no one but yourself, and his messenger solicits for him a private interview.

ELV. Very well, let it be so. I will give orders to that effect; be it your care to bring him in. How great is my impatience! Is it joy? is it grief that is awaiting me? *(Exit.)*

SCENE III.—DON PEDRO, ELIZA.

EL. Where?

PED. You are looking for me, madam?

EL. Where is your master?

PED. Close at hand; shall I go and fetch him?

EL. Yes, tell him to come; tell him that he is anxiously expected, and that he will be seen by no one but the princess. (*Exit DON PEDRO.*) I hardly know what to think of all this mystery and of all the precautions he takes. But here he is already.

SCENE IV.—DONNA INEZ (*disguised as a man*), ELIZA.

EL. Sir, in order to receive you we have But what do I see? Ah! madam, can my eyes?

IN. Hush! do not betray me, Eliza, and let me hope that I may breathe in peace in this place. I spread a report of my death, and, thanks to this deceit, I escaped from my cruel tyrants, for such have my relations proved to be. I have avoided that odious marriage, to which I should have preferred death itself. Dressed as I am, and with that report spread abroad, we must try to keep my fate a secret from all. I may thus be saved from that unjust persecution which would follow me even here.

EL. I am glad we were alone, as I might not have been able to have hidden my surprise. But go into this room and dry the tears of the princess. Your presence will fill her heart with joy. You will find her alone, she herself has taken care that there should be no witness to your interview.

† SCENE V.—DON ALVAREZ, ELIZA.

EL. Is it you, Don Alvarez?

ALV. The prince sends me to entreat you to take up his cause. There is no hope of his life, fair Eliza, unless he obtains a moment of conversation with Donna Elvira. He is beside himself but here he is.

SCENE VI.—DON GARCIA, DON ALVAREZ, ELIZA.

GAR. Eliza, pray feel for my misfortune; let the terrible sufferings of my heart find an advocate in you.

EL. In the princess's place I should look with very different eyes upon your sufferings; but either the direct

will of Heaven or our own temperament makes us have different opinions upon all things. As she blames you, however, and looks with horror upon your jealousy, I should counsel you to try to hide from her eyes what so offends her. A full understanding which makes two hearts seem like one is better than a hundred ordinary attentions. This similarity of thought firmly unites them, for nothing pleases us so much as to see ourselves reproduced in those we love.

GAR. I know it, but alas! fate seems against me; whenever I most earnestly endeavour to follow so wise a plan, snares arise that always entrap my heart. She but too plainly in the presence of my rival forswore my love, and gave to him eager proof of tenderness; still it was wrong of me, in my passion, to accuse her of having introduced him here, and I should experience the greatest distress, if I left upon her mind the impression that she has any just ground of complaint against me. Yes, if she forsakes me, it shall only be through the faithlessness of her heart. I will by accusing myself of my too great impetuosity in blaming her, leave no excuse for her ingratitude.

EL. Give her resentment time to abate before you try to see her again.

GAR. Ah! if you have any regard for me, arrange an interview; it is a request she must grant me, and I will not move from here before her cruel disdain shows at least

EL. I beg of you to defer for a time this explanation.

GAR. No, no, in vain would you persuade me.

EL. (*aside*). The princess alone can send him away; a word from her will be sufficient. (*to DON GARCIA*) Stay here, my lord, I will go and speak to her.

GAR. Tell her that I have banished from my presence Don Lopez, whose information caused my offence, that never he

SCENE VII.—DON GARCIA, DON ALVAREZ.

GAR. (*looking in at the door left half-open by ELIZA*). What do I see! just heavens! can I believe my own eyes?

Alas, how should I doubt what they now behold! The measure of my afflictions is full. This fatal blow completely overwhelms me! When my heart felt crushed with suspicion, it was the warning voice of Heaven telling me of the fearful disgrace to come.

ALV. What have you seen, my lord, that can thus move you?

GAR. What my reason refuses to believe; the overthrow of all creation would astonish me less. All is over with me fate I cannot speak

ALV. My lord, endeavour to be calm.

GAR. I have seen . . . Vengeance! O Heaven!

ALV. What sudden alarm

GAR. Nothing but death is left to me!

ALV. But, my lord, what could

GAR. Ah! I am undone! I am betrayed! I am murdered! A man—can I say it and live?—a man in the arms of the faithless Elvira!

ALV. My lord! the princess is so virtuous that

GAR. Ah! do not Don Alvarez, you cannot speak for her honour when my eyes have witnessed so base an action.

ALV. Our passions often mislead us, my lord, and make deceptions seem true to us.

GAR. Don Alvarez, leave me. I can listen to no adviser on such an occasion, I can only follow the dictates of my wrath.

ALV. (*aside*). All arguments are useless in his state of mind.

GAR. O fatal wound! but I must see who it is, and with my own hand punish But see, she is coming. Ah! my rage, be still!

SCENE VIII.—DONNA ELVIRA, DON GARCIA, DON ALVAREZ.

ELV. Well, what is it you want? However bold you may be, can you hope for anything after such outrageous conduct? Dare you again present yourself before me? What have you to say that it will become me to hear?

GAR. That all the wickedness a soul is capable of, can

in nothing be compared to your perfidy ; that fate, devils, and incensed Heaven never produced anything so worthless as yourself.

ELV. Ah ! I was expecting an apology for your outrage, but you use, I see, a different style.

GAR. Yes, yes. You little thought that I should see you in your lover's arms, that I should be led most fatally to behold through this open door your shame and my own doom. So the happy lover has returned ? Or is it some new rival unknown to me ? O Heaven ! give my heart sufficient endurance to bear such dreadful tortures. Ah ! yes, let the blush of shame cover your face ; you are right, for your treachery is known. So the presentiments of my heart were true, its alarms were but too well founded, and those frequent suspicions which were thought odious, were true guides to what my eyes have now seen. Yes, in spite of all your skill in dissimulation, Heaven hinted to me what I had to fear. But do not think that I shall bear this insult unavenged. I know that it is not in our power to govern our inclinations ; that love is always spontaneous ; that we cannot enter a heart by force, and that every heart is free to name its conqueror. I would not complain, therefore, if you had from the first spoken to me without deceit ; for although you would have crushed within me the very springs of my life, I should have blamed none but my fate for it. But to think that my love was encouraged by you ! It is such a treacherous, such a perfidious action, that no punishment seems too great for it. After such an outrage, fear everything from me ; I am no longer master of myself, anger has conquered me. Betrayed on all sides, my love will revenge itself to the utmost. I will sacrifice everything to my fury, and end my despair with my life.

ELV. I have shown great forbearance in listening to you ; may I not speak freely in my turn ?

GAR. And pray, with what fine speeches inspired by falsehood will you . . . ?

ELV. If you still have anything to say you may go on, I am ready to hear you. If not, perhaps you will listen to me for a moment or two.

GAR. Well, I listen. O Heaven ! what patience is mine !

ELV. I will conquer my indignation, and will reply calmly to your insulting words.

GAR. No doubt, considering

ELV. I have listened to you as long as you pleased, pray do the like for me. I stand amazed before my destiny, and I shall believe that there never was anything under heaven more strange, more outrageous, or more difficult to believe. I have a lover whose whole care is to persecute me; who in spite of the numerous protestations of love that pass his lips, has not the least esteem for me in his heart,—nothing that can do justice to the blood from which I spring,—nothing that can defend the innocence of my actions against the least shadow of a false appearance. Yes, I see (DON GARCIA *shows an impatient desire to speak.*) I beg of you not to interrupt me. I see my misfortune carried to that extent that he who would have me believe that he loves me, and who ought to take up my cause against the whole universe if any doubted my honour, is its greatest enemy. He seizes every occasion of suspecting me; he not only suspects, he also indulges in scenes of violence which cannot but deeply wound my love. Far from acting like a lover who would rather die than offend her he loves, who would hardly complain, and who alludes with the greatest respect only to the suspicions he may have, if once a doubt has entered his mind, he directly proceeds to extreme measures, and is all rage, invectives, and threats. However, I will forget all that may render him odious to me, I will, out of pure kindness, make this new affront an opportunity for a reconciliation.—The unkind treatment I have just borne comes from what you accidentally saw, and I do not mean to contradict the testimony of your eyes, for perhaps you had reason to be surprised.

GAR. And is not ?

ELV. I have not yet done; bear with me a little longer and you shall soon know what resolution I have come to. Our whole future is now in the balance: you are on the brink of a great precipice, and you can be saved or lost for ever, according to the course you take. If, notwithstanding what you have seen, Prince, you act towards me as you ought, and simply believe me when I condemn as wrong this

outburst in you ; if, upon my word alone, you can bring yourself to believe that I am innocent, and if on that word you banish all your suspicions ; this submission, this proof of your esteem, shall blot out of my heart all I have suffered from you ; I then will instantly retract all I said in the first moment of my just indignation. If, some day, it is given to me to choose freely for myself without prejudice to the duties of my birth, your ready submission having satisfied my honour, I promise to reward your love with my heart and hand. But understand well now what I have to tell you. If with this offer I do not prevail upon you to abandon all your jealous suspicions ; if you are not satisfied with the assurance my heart and birth can give you ; if your distrust compels me to produce a proof of my innocence in order to convince you, I am ready to do so, and you shall be satisfied ; only remember that from that moment all is ended between us ; you must for ever renounce all pretensions to my hand. I take Heaven to witness, that if it comes to this, whatever fate may have in store for us, I will rather die than belong to you. Choose between either alternative ; one or the other may satisfy you.

GAR. Righteous Heaven ! could any one possibly think of anything more deceitful and unfair ? Did ever malice find in hell darker treachery and a more merciless way of embarrassing a lover ? Ah ! faithless woman, you well know how to take advantage of my great weakness, and make the deep yearning love I have for you, serve your own ends ! Your treachery discovered, you must find an excuse, and you cunningly offer to forgive me. With assumed kindness you invent some trick to divert my wrath. You want to save a wretched lover from the vengeance that threatens him, and you therefore try to entangle my reason with your artifice. Yes, you would fain prevent me from persisting in an inquiry which must prove your guilt. Pretending to be altogether innocent, you refuse me all convincing proofs, except upon such conditions as you most fervently hope my love will never accept. But you are mistaken if you think you can deceive me. Yes, I am resolved to see what is to plead in your defence, what prodigy can justify the baseness I beheld, and condemn my anger.

ELV. Remember that by this choice you abandon all pretensions to the heart of Donna Elvira.

GAR. Be it so. I subscribe to it all; besides, as I am now situated, my pretensions cease.

ELV. You will repent having given way to your wrath.

GAR. No, no; all this is mere trifling; it belongs rather to me to forewarn you that another may perhaps soon repent. The traitor, whoever he be, will find it difficult to save his life from the fury of my vengeance.

ELV. Ah! I have borne with this too long; my poor, foolish heart is angry at last. Let us abandon the senseless lover to his own caprice, and since he wishes to destroy all hope, let him destroy it. (*to DON GARCIA*) You compel me to act against my own wish, but I will give you no more occasion to offend me.

SCENE IX.—DONNA ELVIRA, DON GARCIA, ELIZA, DON ALVAREZ.

ELV. (*to ELIZA*). Desire my beloved to come Go, you understand me, say that I earnestly ask it.

GAR. And can I ?

ELV. Patience, you will be satisfied.

EL. (*aside, going out*). This is no doubt some new freak of his jealousy.

ELV. I hope you will persevere in this noble indignation to the last; and above all, remember what price you have paid.

SCENE X.—DONNA ELVIRA, DON GARCIA, DONNA INEZ, ELIZA, DON ALVAREZ.

ELV. (*to DON GARCIA, showing him DONNA INEZ*). Thanks to Heaven, you may behold her who has given rise to your generous suspicions. Look well on this face, and see if you do not recognise at once the features of Donna Inez.

GAR. O heavens!

ELV. If the anger that sways your soul also afflicts your sight, there are other eyes you can consult. These will leave you no room to doubt. The report of her death

was spread to secure her from the power of the tyrant who persecuted her. Under this dress, she disguised herself to profit by her pretended death. (*to DONNA INEZ*) Forgive me, I pray, madam, if I have been forced to reveal your secret, and to frustrate your intentions. I see myself exposed to Don Garcia's insults; I am deprived of all liberty of action, and my honour, ever suspected, is at each moment forced to defend itself. Don Garcia, mad with jealousy, saw us when I was so happy in embracing you, and I have had to suffer the grossest indignities. (*to DON GARCIA*) Yes, behold the cause of your wrath, and the convincing proofs you would have of my shame. Now, enjoy like an absolute tyrant the explanations you were determined to have; but remember that, on my part, I can never blot out of my memory the heinous offence for which I am the victim. If I ever forget my promise, may Heaven pour its severest chastisements upon my head; let a thunderbolt reduce me to ashes if I ever listen to your love. Come, Inez; let us leave a spot contaminated by the looks of a furious monster; let us flee from the infection of his contact; let us avoid the onslaught of his mad rage; henceforth let our only study be the means of freeing ourselves from his hands.

IN. My lord, you have wronged virtue itself by your violent and unjust suspicions. (*Exeunt ELVIRA and INEZ.*)

SCENE XI.—DON GARCIA, DON ALVAREZ.

GAR. What a fatal gleam of light has burst over my deceived imagination; it leaves no other alternative to my soul but horror and deep despair! Ah! Don Alvarez, I see that you were right, that hell has breathed its poison into my soul, and that I have no greater enemy than myself. To what purpose do I love with the most ardent love that ever was felt, if my passion only shows itself by transports of jealousy which torment me and make it hateful? My death alone can avenge her for the insult offered to her divine charms. Alas! what could I do now? I have lost the only object that made life dear to me. I could renounce all hope of her love, and it will be still easier to abandon life itself.

ALV. My lord

GAR. Yes, Don Alvarez, I can live no longer; no persuasion shall deter me from this resolution, but in hastening my end I wish to render an important service to the princess. Animated by this noble desire, I will seek some glorious means of quitting life. I will prove my love by some worthy deed of valour, so that when I die for her sake, she may pity me, and on seeing herself revenged, she may feel that if I offended, it was through an excess of love. My hand shall be the one to deal the mortal blow to the usurper Mauregat. I will be beforehand with Castile, and thus I shall have the pleasure in death of snatching this honour from my rival's grasp.

ALV. Such a service would, no doubt, my lord, cancel your offence; but to hazard

GAR. Let me fulfil my duty.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—DON ALVAREZ, ELIZA.

ALV. No, never was there such a painful surprise. He had just matured that noble plan, and had centred all the earnestness of his despair upon the desire of killing Mauregat. By this deed of valour he hoped to obtain his pardon, and to avoid the mortification of sharing his glory with his rival. He had just left here when the unwelcome tidings reached him that the rival he wished to forestall had, by slaying the traitor, snatched from him the honour for which he was longing. Don Alphonso, who is to reap the benefit of this prompt victory, will now show himself, according to Don Silvio's wish, and will come here to fetch his sister. It is publicly said, and readily believed, that Don Alphonso intends giving his sister in marriage to Don Silvio as a reward for having opened to him a way to the throne.

EL. Donna Elvira has heard this news; Don Louis has confirmed it, and he has sent her word that Leon is now waiting for her happy return with Don Alphonso, and

that she is to receive a husband from the hands of her brother. Although he does not name him, it is easy to understand that the husband must be Don Silvio.

ALV. This blow to the prince

EL. Will prove very hard to bear, and I pity him in his misfortune. Yet, if I am not mistaken, he is still dear to her he has offended. Notwithstanding the success boasted of, the princess shows no very great satisfaction at the news of her brother's coming or at the letter, but

SCENE II.—DONNA ELVIRA, DONNA INEZ (*disguised as a man*), ELIZA, DON ALVAREZ.

ELV. Don Alvarez, ask the prince to come here. (*to DONNA INEZ*) Madam, allow me to speak to him in your presence of this unexpected turn of events which has taken me by surprise, and do not accuse me of changing my mind too quickly, if I cease all resentment against him. His unforeseen misfortune has effected a change in my heart. He is unhappy enough without having to bear with my hatred also. Heaven, who sends him such a fiery trial, has but too well heard my oath. When he offended my honour, I vowed openly never to be his; but when I see destiny take up my revenge, I feel that I treated his love too severely. The ill-success of whatever he undertakes for my sake cancels his offence, and restores to him my love. Yes; I am more than revenged by such terrible failures. Yes, they have more than revenged me, and have disarmed my indignation. Now I only care to comfort an unhappy lover in his misfortunes; I believe that his love well deserves the compassion I would show him.

IN. It would be wrong to blame the tender feelings you still have for him, when he has for you He is coming. His face shows but too plainly what he has suffered from this unforeseen turn of events.

SCENE III.—DON GARCIA, DONNA ELVIRA, DONNA INEZ, ELIZA.

GAR. Madam, how will you bear with the odious presence of one who

ELV. Prince, let us speak no more of my resentment; your fate has wrought a change in my heart. When I contemplate your helplessness under its hard dealing, my wrath ceases, and our peace is made. Yes, although you have deserved the afflictions which Heaven has sent you; although in your jealous suspicions you attacked my reputation and treated me with incredible indignity, I must confess that I pity your misfortune so far as to be almost sad at our success. I hate the immense service Don Silvio has rendered, since my heart must be sacrificed to reward it. I wish it were in my power to recall the moments when my oath only stood between us. However, you know how our fate is always dependent on public interests, and that the brother who disposes of my hand is also my king. Submit like me, Prince, to the reasons of state to which a woman of my birth is always subject; and if your love meets with great trials, let the interest I take in you be your comfort; do not make use of the power your valour gives you in this place. It would be but an unworthy struggle for you to try and resist destiny. We in vain oppose its decrees; and a ready submission is proof of greatness. Do not rebel, therefore, against what fate evidently requires of you. Open the gates of Astorga to the brother I am expecting; allow my sad heart to give him the homage he has a right to expect from me, and perhaps this fatal duty which I render him against my will, may not have all the consequences you fear.

GAR. Madam, your kindness in wishing to soften the cruel blow I am to expect, is beyond all that could be said. Better leave me to the horrors of my harsh destiny; you have a right to do so. After what I have done I have nothing to say, I have deserved the greatest punishment. I know that whatever evil may befall me, I have lost all right to complain. Alas! in my utter misery, where can I find boldness enough to complain of your feelings towards me? I made myself odious to you by insulting you, and when, in my wish to sacrifice myself to you, I thought of rendering some service to your family, I had the bitterness to be forestalled by a rival. Now I can pretend to nothing; I justly deserve the blow by which I am threatened, and I see it coming without daring to implore you to have

pity on me. The only thing left me in my extreme distress is to seek a remedy in myself, and by death to find a solution to all these miseries. Yes, Don Alphonso will soon be here, and my rival is already announced. He has lost no time in coming to claim his reward for the death of the tyrant. Fear not that I shall make use of the power I have here; were you to authorize me, there is nothing in the world I would not brave to secure possession of you, but I have no right to expect such a signal favour, when I have done everything to make you hate me; I will not oppose the fulfilment of your just intentions with a useless struggle. No, you have full freedom of action. I will open the gates of Astorga to this happy conqueror, and will submit to the utmost rigour of my fate.

SCENE IV.—DONNA ELVIRA, DONNA INEZ (*disguised as a man*), ELIZA.

ELV. Do not think that his despair is the only cause of my affliction. You will do me but justice if you believe that above all things I grieve for you, and that friendship is to me dearer than love. If I complain of a dire misfortune, it is that Heaven in its anger should have found in me those shafts it hurls against you, and made me guilty of giving rise to a passion which makes Don Silvio treat your kind heart so unworthily.

IN. This is an accident for which you should not complain to Heaven on my account. If my feeble attractions were to expose me to the misfortune of being forsaken by my lover, Heaven could not more soften the blow than by choosing you to captivate the heart I loved; and I should not feel dishonoured by an inconstancy arising from your superior attractions. If I am distressed because of this inconstancy, it is that I foresee it will prove fatal to your love. In the deep grief I feel for you, I reproach myself for not having been able to retain a heart whose devotion to you so greatly interferes with your happiness.

ELV. Rather blame yourself for your unfortunate silence, which kept your mutual devotion a secret from me. If I had known it sooner, perhaps we should both have been spared many a sorrow. My coldness from the beginning

might have crushed the hopes of an inconstant lover, and have perhaps made him return

IN. Here he is.

ELV. You can remain without meeting his gaze. Do not leave me; and however painful it may be to hear what I shall tell him

IN. I consent, although I know well that any one in my place would avoid being present at such an interview.

ELV. If Heaven seconds my wishes, you will have no reason to complain of it.

SCENE V.—DON ALPHONSO (*thought to be* DON SILVIO), DONNA ELVIRA, DONNA INEZ (*disguised as a man*), ELIZA.

ELV. Before you speak, I beseech you, my lord, to hear me for a moment. Fame has already brought to us the news of the wonders you have achieved, and I am astonished to see, as all do, how, thanks to you, our fortunes have quickly changed. I am fully aware that such eminent services cannot be too highly rewarded, and that nothing could be refused to him who has placed my brother upon the throne of his ancestors. Yet whatever my brother in his gratitude may offer you, pray make a generous use of your advantages, and do not suffer that your glorious deeds should cause me to bend under an imperious yoke. When you are fully aware of the state of my heart, let not your love persist in triumphing over a just refusal, and allow the brother, whom I shall soon meet, to begin his reign by an act of tyranny over me. Leon has other rewards with which to honour your courage; and to offer you a heart which can only be yours by compulsion is a prize unworthy of you. Can you be satisfied by possessing, through coercion, the person you love? It is a sorry advantage, and a noble-minded lover will always refuse to be happy upon such conditions. He would rather owe nothing to the force which birth brings to bear, and his devotion to her he loves is always too great to suffer her to be sacrificed to him as a victim. It is not that I reserve for another what I refuse to you; no, my lord. I promise this to you. I give you my word of honour that no one

will ever have any right over me, that a holy retreat will secure me from any other

ALPH. Madam, I have listened too long to remonstrances which are due, on your part, to a too ready credence of a false report. Allow me in a few words to undeceive you. I know that everywhere it is said, and believed, that I inflicted death upon the tyrant, but it is only to the people itself, stirred up by Don Louis, that such an honour is due. This has given rise to the rumour that it was owing to my valour. Don Louis, the better to carry out his generous purpose, spread a report that, helped by my followers, I had made myself master of the town. The people, excited by this news, hastened to put the usurper to death. Don Louis' cautious zeal has done everything, and he has just sent me word of it by one of his confidants. Yet, a secret of great importance, which will astonish you as much as it did me, was at the same time revealed to me. You are expecting a brother, and Leon its rightful sovereign; behold him before you! I am Alphonso. My life saved, and my having been brought up as the Prince of Castile are glorious proofs of the love which united Don Louis and the king our father. The former has in his possession all the proofs of the secret, and will show its truth before the whole world. Now, another anxiety has taken possession of my mind, not that my conduct towards you is not clear to me, and that the lover struggles in my heart with the brother. No; my love receives without murmur the change of affection commanded by nature, and the tie of relationship which unites us has so well altered the nature of the love I had for you, that my heart now only longs for its former chains, and for the means of giving to the adorable Inez all that her extreme goodness has deserved. But her unknown fate fills me with anxiety, and if what is reported proved to be true, in vain would Leon call me to fill the vacant throne. A crown has no temptation for me unless the joy were given me of placing it on the head of her for whom Heaven destined me, for so I may make amends for the wrong I have done to her noble virtues. Madam, it is through you I expect to hear what has become of her.

I beseech you, tell me all you know; hasten my despair or the happiness of my whole life.

ELV. Do not wonder if I take some time to answer you, my lord; this news has bewildered me. I will not take upon myself to tell you whether Inez be dead or enjoys the light of day, but from this knight, one most faithful to her, you may have information concerning her.

ALPH. (*recognising* DONNA INEZ). Ah! madam, what delight for me in such an anxious moment to behold your celestial beauty here. But how will you look upon an inconstant lover whose crime

IN. Ah! do not insult me, do not venture to say that a heart I love could be inconstant to me. I cannot bear the thought, and your apology wounds me. The noble qualities of the princess are a sufficient excuse for the admiration you felt for her, and forbid the thought that you could be guilty towards me. Know that if I thought you guilty, a noble pride would never allow me to forgive you; that neither repentance nor commands could make my heart forget such an offence.

ELV. Ah! my brother—allow me to call you by such a dear name—how happy you make your sister! How I delight in your choice, and bless the course of events which enables you to crown the pure affection of two noble hearts I so dearly love

SCENE VI.—DON GARCIA, DONNA ELVIRA, DONNA INEZ,
DON ALPHONSO, ELIZA.

GAR. For mercy's sake, madam, hide your joy from me, and suffer me to die in the belief that a feeling of duty to some extent compels you. I know that you are free to dispose of your hand, and it is not my intention to hinder you from doing what you please; you see it plainly enough; you see what obedience your orders have forced from me. But I must say that your joy takes me by surprise, and that such a sight awakens in me a passion to which I should be afraid to give way, although I should never forgive myself, if it could make me lose that profound respect I wish to preserve towards you. You have ordered

me to bear patiently with my misfortune, and your commands are so precious to me that I had rather die than disobey you. But your present joy makes the trial too great for me to bear; the wisest man on such an occasion would hardly answer for what he might do. Spare me, madam, this cruel trial; I beseech you to restrain yourself for a while, and however happy the love of my rival may make you, do not force me to be a wretched witness of it. It is the smallest favour, I believe, an unfortunate lover can ask. It will not be for long; my departure will soon deliver you from my unwelcome presence. I go where sorrow will consume my heart, and report only will tell me of your marriage. I need not hasten to witness such a spectacle; without seeing it, madam, it will kill me.

IN. My lord, allow me to blame you for your reproach. The princess has felt deeply for your sorrow, but if now you see her happy it is because of the joy which awaits you. She is rejoicing over a success which favours your heart's desire—she is rejoicing because in your rival she has found a brother. This is Don Alphonso of whom so much has been said, and the secret has only just been told her.

ALPH. My lord, my heart, after much suffering, has all it can desire without depriving you of happiness, and I rejoice so much the more that I am able to forward your love.

GAR. Alas! my lord, your goodness overwhelms me. You deign to approve of my dearest wishes; Heaven has spared me the terrible blow I feared, and any other man but myself would be happy. But the welcome discovery of such a secret only tends to make me feel guilty towards her I adore. I have fallen once more the prey to those wretched suspicions, against which I have so often been warned, my love has become odious, and must lose all hope of ever being accepted. Yes, Donna Elvira has but too good reasons to hate me; I find myself unworthy of forgiveness, and, however fortunate fate may be to me, death, death alone, is all I look for.

ELV. No, no, prince, your sincere repentance awakens in my heart more tender feelings towards you. I can no longer abide by the oaths I made; your sufferings, your

respect, your grief have touched my heart. I see an excess of love in all your actions, and your disease deserves all my compassion. I feel, prince, that we should be indulgent for faults which come . . . and in short, prince, jealous or not jealous, my king can dispose of my hand to you without fear of compulsion.

GAR. Heaven enable my heart to bear with this great joy!

ALPH. Let me hope, my lord, that, after our vain dissensions, this marriage will for ever unite our hearts and kingdoms. But time presses, Leon calls us; let duty and pleasure go hand in hand; let us by our presence and by our energy give the last blow to the party of the tyrant.

THE SCHOOL FOR HUSBANDS.

(L'ÉCOLE DES MARIS.)

'L'ÉCOLE DES MARIS' was acted at the Théâtre du Palais Royal on the 24th of February, 1661. It obtained an immense success, a success sadly wanted by Molière and his company after the failure of 'Dom Garcie.'

Molière acted the part of Sganarelle.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

SGANARELLE, }
ARISTE, } *brothers.*

VALÈRE, *lover to ISABELLE.*

ERGASTE, *servant to VALÈRE.*

A Commissary.

A Notary.

ISABELLE, }
LÉONORE, } *sisters.*

LISETTE, *maid to LÉONORE.*

The scene is in Paris.

THE SCHOOL FOR HUSBANDS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—SGANARELLE, ARISTE.

SGA. Pray, brother, let us cease this constant discussion, and let each of us live as he pleases. Although, in years, you have the advantage over me and are old enough to be wise, I tell you frankly that I am in no way inclined to be directed by you; I mean to follow my own fancy, and am perfectly well satisfied with my way of living.

ARIS. But every one blames it.

SGA. Yes, fools like you, brother.

ARIS. Thank you for the compliment.

SGA. Yet I should like to hear, since I must be told everything, what those kind critics can see in me to find fault with?

ARIS. Well, they blame that churlish temper of yours which makes you shun all the pleasures of society, and makes all you do and have absurd—yes, even to your clothes.

SGA. Quite so! I ought to be a slave to fashion, and dress myself without any regard to the comfort of my own person! Would you not like to persuade me, with all your nonsensical rubbish, my worthy elder brother—for, thank Heaven! you are older by twenty years at least, though, of course, it is not worth mentioning—would you not like to persuade me, I say, to adopt the fashions of our young dandies? Would you not like me to wear one of those little hats which expose weak brains to the wind, and beneath it flaxen curls, whose vastness overshadow the human countenance?

Should I wear one of those short and tight doublets and those large collars hanging down to the navel; those sleeves we see dripping in the sauce at table, and those petticoats yclept breeches;* those pretty shoes trimmed all over with ribbons, which make one look like a feather-legged pigeon; and those large canions† into which every morning both legs are forced, and in which our worthy gallants march with legs spread out like a shuttlecock?‡ No doubt you would like to see me dressed out in that style, for do you not wear all this trumpery yourself?

ARIS. We should always fall in with the majority, and never cause ourselves to be pointed at. Extremes are offensive, and a wise man should show no affectation either in his dress or in his language, but readily comply with the changes custom brings. I am not one of those who refine upon fashion, and are greatly distressed if they see anybody outdo them in the excesses they indulge in. But I maintain that it is wrong, whatever may be our own opinion, persistently to avoid doing like others; and I think it better to be numbered among the fools than to see myself the only one on the side of the wise men.

SGA. All this savours of the old man, who, in order to impose upon people, hides his grey hairs under a black wig.

ARIS. It is strange how you always throw my age in my teeth, and how you upbraid me both for my decency in dress and for my cheerfulness, as if old age were to bid farewell to all joy, and should think of nothing but death; and because it is already unprepossessing in many things, it should also, of necessity, be both crabbed and slovenly.

SGA. However that may be, I am determined not to alter

* "Those petticoats yclept breeches." More than eight yards of stuff were wanted to make them.

† In Molière's time rolls of starched linen adorned with lace, fastened below each knee. They were then worn so wide and long as to prove very cumbrous when walking. "The origin of this word is probably the Spanish cañon = tube or pipe. Hence it may denote that which fits and encases anything."—Latham.

‡ "Et par qui nous voyons messieurs les gallants marcher écarquillés ainsi que des volants." The sense of *volants* in this passage is doubtful; it may mean the *sails of a windmill*. Littré gives it this meaning. Still, an inverted shuttlecock is probably what is intended by Molière.

my dress one jot. In spite of the fashion I shall have a hat which affords convenient shelter for my head; a large long doublet buttoned-up close, so that it may keep the stomach warm for digestion; a pair of breeches made to fit me, and shoes in which, according to our ancestors' good custom, my feet may not be tortured. Whoever does not approve, let him keep his eyes shut.

SCENE II.—LÉONORE, ISABELLE, LISETTE; ARISTE and SGANARELLE *at the front of the stage.*

LÉO. (*to ISABELLE*). I take it all upon myself in case you are scolded.

LIS. (*to ISABELLE*). Always in a room alone, and never to see a soul!

ISA. So he will have it.

LÉO. I pity you, sister.

LIS. (*to LÉONORE*). It is very fortunate for you, madam,* that his brother is so different; fate was very kind to you in putting you under the care of a reasonable man.

ISA. It is a wonder that he neither locked me up nor took me out with him to-day.

LIS. Well! I would send him to the devil with his ruff, and

SGA. (*run against by LISETTE*). Pray may I know where you are going?

LÉO. We are not quite decided; I was urging my sister to come and enjoy the freshness of this fine weather, but

SGA. (*to LÉONORE*). Oh, you may go wherever you like; (*pointing to LISETTE*) you may go too, and roam about with her; (*to ISABELLE*) but as for you, if you please, I forbid you to go out.

ARIS. Ah! brother, let them go together and enjoy themselves a little.

SGA. I am yours most obediently.

* See 'L'Impromptu de Versailles' for the use of *Madame* and *Made-moiselle* in the time of Molière.

ARIS. Youth requires

SGA. Youth is foolish; and so is old age sometimes.

ARIS. Do you imagine that there is any harm in her being with Léonore?

SGA. Oh dear no! but with me she is safer still.

ARIS. But

SGA. But her actions are under my guidance; and I know, in short, that I am somewhat interested in them.

ARIS. Have I less interest in what her sister does?

SGA. Well, well, let each of us judge and act as he pleases. They are orphans, and our friend, their father, committed them both to our care on his death-bed; charging us either to marry them ourselves, or at a proper age to dispose of them otherwise. By this contract he meant to give us over them, from their infancy, the full authority both of father and husband. You undertook to bring up the one, I took charge of the other. You govern yours entirely according to your own pleasure; allow me, if you please, the same freedom in managing mine.

ARIS. It seems to me

SGA. It seems to me that this is the right way of looking at the matter, and I am not afraid to say it out. You, on your part, allow your ward to go about sprucely dressed: I have no objection. You let her have footman and maid: I agree to it. You let her gad about, enjoy idleness, and be run after by the young swells: I am quite satisfied. But I am resolved that mine shall live according to my fancy and not according to hers; that she shall be clad in homely serge, and only wear black on grand occasions. I wish her to keep at home like a well-brought up girl, give herself wholly to household cares; darn my linen to fill up her leisure hours, and knit stockings as an amusement. I will have her shut her ears to all the nonsense of the gallants, and never stir out without somebody to watch her. In a word, flesh is weak, and I know what people say. I have no inclination for horns, and, as it is her destiny to marry me, I am determined to be able to answer for her person as I would for my own.

ISA. You have no reason, I think, to

SGA. Be silent. I will teach you to go out without me!

LÉO. What, sir

SGA. Excuse me, but my words are not addressed to you; you are far too discreet and prudent.

LÉO. Are you angry at seeing Isabelle with us?

SGA. Yes, since I must speak my mind, for you spoil her. Your visits here are unpleasant to me, and I should be much obliged to you if you would discontinue them.

LÉO. Shall I also speak my mind to you? I do not know what effect all this produces upon her, but I know well what I should feel if I were the object of such distrust; and although we have had the same father and mother, we greatly differ, if your proceedings ever inspire her with anything like love.

LIS. I must say that it is a shameful thing for any one to have recourse to such precautions. Are we, then, living amongst Turks, that women should be locked up? I am told they are kept like slaves there, and that this is why those people are cursed by Heaven. Our honour, sir, must be weak indeed, if it requires such constant watching. Do you really think, after all, that any amount of precaution could prevent us from doing as we wish? and that if we once take anything into our heads, the shrewdest man among you will not prove an ass? Pooh! all this vigilance is but the dream of an idiot; and, believe me, the safest way is still to trust us. He that enthrals us runs a great risk, and our honour is itself the best guard. It almost makes one wish to do wrong when so much care is taken to prevent any sinning. As for me, if I saw myself suspected by my husband, I should be sorely tempted to let him see his fears realised.

SGA. This is the result of your training, my fine tutor. Can you bear all this without being moved?

ARIS. Her talk, brother, should only make us laugh; still there is much common sense in what she says. Women like to enjoy a little liberty. We cannot govern them by such austere means: suspicions, precautions, bolts and bars do not make a wife or a girl virtuous. It is honour which keeps them in the right path of duty, and not the severity which we display towards them. To say the truth, a woman virtuous by force is not worth much. In vain we

pretend to direct all their actions, unless we have gained their hearts first; and, notwithstanding all my care, I should not consider my honour safe in the hands of one who, assailed by temptations, should want nothing but an opportunity of doing wrong.

SGA. All this is mere nonsense.

ARIS. Say that it is so, if you like. But I still maintain that we should teach young people their duties pleasantly, that we should reprove their defects with gentleness, and not frighten them at the name of virtue. It is thus that I have done with Léonore, I have not made crimes of little liberties; I have always been ready to comply with her youthful desires, and, thank Heaven! I do not repent of it. I have allowed her to frequent good company, go to parties, balls, and plays, for I hold that all those things are proper to form the minds of young people, and the world teaches us better how to live than any book we may read. She likes to spend money in clothes, linen and ribbons; and why not? I try to satisfy her wishes, and these are pleasures we should allow young people when we can afford it. Although her father's commands require her to marry me, it is not my intention to force her to do so. I am well aware that our ages do not exactly correspond, and I leave her entirely at liberty to do as she likes. If, in her opinion, an income of four thousand crowns, much tenderness and devotion, can compensate, in such a match, for a great disproportion of age, she may take me for a husband; if not, let her choose for herself. If she can be happier without me, I am willing it should be so, for I had rather see her married to another than feel she gave me her hand against her own inclination.

SGA. Dear me, how sweet he is! all sugar and honey!

ARIS. In short, that is my way of looking at things, and I thank Heaven that I shall never follow those severe maxims which see nothing but sin in every act, and which make children long for the death of their parents.

SGA. But it is difficult to conquer the habits of liberty acquired when young, and her ways of thinking will prove rather unpleasant to you when she has to change her manner of living.

ARIS. But why change it?

SGA. Why?

ARIS. Yes.

SGA. Do you ask me?

ARIS. Is there anything in it injurious to one's honour?

SGA. What! if you marry her, you will leave her the same freedom which she takes as a maiden?

ARIS. Certainly.

SGA. You will even indulge her in patches and ribbons?

ARIS. Without doubt.

SGA. You will suffer her to go like a madcap to all the balls and public assemblies.

ARIS. Why not?

SGA. And you will receive all the young men in your house I suppose.

ARIS. And what then?

SGA. And they will play and give entertainments?*

ARIS. They shall be welcome.

SGA. And your wife will listen to their soft speeches?

ARIS. To be sure.

SGA. And you will see these coxcombs without showing that you have enough of them?

ARIS. Naturally.

SGA. There, that's enough, you are nothing but an old fool. (*to ISABELLE*) Go in, it is not right for you to hear such infamous doctrines. (*Exit ISABELLE.*)

SCENE III.—ARISTE, SGANARELLE, LÉONORE, LISETTE.

ARIS. I will trust my wife implicitly, and I mean to live as I have always done.

SGA. How pleased I shall be when his wife deceives him!

ARIS. I don't know what Fortune has in reserve for me, but if you fail to be deceived, it will not be your fault; you take all the necessary pains to secure such a fate.

SGA. Yes, you may laugh! Oh! how charming to see an old man of almost threescore years cutting jokes.

* *Cadeau.* See 'Les Précieuses ridicules,' Act i., Sc. xii., p. 173.

LÉO. I pledge myself that if I take him for my husband, he shall never suffer the fate you speak of; he may rest satisfied as to that. But I would not answer for anything if I were your wife.

LIS. It would be wrong to deceive those who fully trust us; but as to people like you, serve them right, I say.

SGA. Get out, you and your cursed tongue.

ARIS. You have drawn all this abuse upon yourself, brother. Farewell, change your mind, and remember that it's a bad plan to lock up one's wife. I am your servant.

SGA. I am not yours.

SCENE IV.—SGANARELLE (*alone*).

Well! they are well matched! What a hopeful family: for master, a senseless old fool*playing the lady's man in a worn-out carcase! for mistress, a young girl, and a perfect flirt withal; then impudent servants. Wisdom itself would lose sense and reason in trying to regulate such a household. Isabelle, by frequenting them, might lose the seeds of honour I have sown in her; and in order to prevent this, I intend shortly to send her back again to our cabbages and turkeys.

SCENE V.—VALÈRE, SGANARELLE, ERGASTE.

VAL. (*at the further end of the stage*). Look, Ergaste, there he is, that Argus I abominate, the harsh guardian of my beloved.

SGA. (*believing himself alone*). Is it not wonderful to see the corruption of our age?

VAL. I should like to speak to him, and try to strike up an acquaintance.

SGA. (*believing himself alone*). Instead of that severity of manners which accompanied virtue in former times, young people are bold, impudent, do not take

VAL. (*bows to SGANARELLE at some distance off*). He does not see that I am bowing to him.

ERG. He may be blind of that eye,* let us pass to the other side.

SGA. (*believing himself alone*). We must leave this place; living in town can only make me

VAL. (*approaching by degrees*). I must try to get admittance to his house.

SGA. (*hearing a noise*). Ah! I thought I heard some one speak In the country, Heaven be praised, my eyes will no longer be offended with all the follies of the time.

ERG. (*to VALÈRE*). Go up to him.

SGA. (*hearing a noise again*). What is it? (*the noise ceases*) My ears tingle. (*believing himself alone*) There, all the amusements of our young girls are limited to (*sees VALÈRE bowing*) Is he bowing to me?

ERG. (*to VALÈRE*). Go nearer.

SGA. (*not minding VALÈRE*). There no young coxcombs come (*VALÈRE bows again*) What the devil? (*turning round, sees ERGASTE bowing on the other side*) Another? What endless capping!

VAL. Sir, I interrupt you, perhaps?

SGA. May be.

VAL. But, sir, the honour of making your acquaintance would be so great a happiness, so sweet a pleasure, that I long to pay my respects to you.

SGA. No doubt.

VAL. And I come to assure you, frankly, that I am entirely at your service.

SGA. I believe you.

VAL. I have the good fortune of being one of your neighbours, and I return thanks to my destiny for it.

SGA. You are right.

VAL. But, sir, have you heard the news which is current at court and which is considered to be true?

SGA. What do I care about the news!

VAL. To be sure; but we may sometimes feel curious

* "*Son mauvais œil peut-être est de ce côté-ci.*" *Mauvais œil* has sometimes the same signification as the English *evil eye*. Here it seems only intended for a joke or, perhaps, a pun. Compare the proverbial expression, "*Il n'entend pas de cette oreille-là.*"

about novelties. I suppose you will go and see the magnificent preparations which are being made to celebrate the birth of our dauphin?*

SGA. Yes, if I choose.

VAL. We must acknowledge that Paris affords many pleasures which are nowhere else to be found. The provinces are a mere desert in comparison. How do you pass away the time?

SGA. In minding my own business.

VAL. Yet our mind requires a little relaxation, and suffers sometimes from too close an application to serious things. How do you employ your evenings before bedtime?

SGA. In doing what I like.

VAL. No doubt; no better answer could be given, and a man shows good sense when he does only what pleases him. If I did not think your mind too occupied, I would come to pay you a visit from time to time, after supper.

SGA. Your humble servant. (*Exit SGANARELLE.*)

SCENE VI.—VALÈRE, ERGASTE.

VAL. What do you think of this strange fellow?

ERG. He is certainly abrupt in his replies, and his reception of you is churlish enough.

VAL. I am boiling over!

ERG. What for?

VAL. What for? Why to see her I love in the power of a tyrant—of a watchful dragon whose severity gives her not a moment of freedom.

ERG. This is the very thing that favours you, and you ought to build great hopes on such conduct. Let me tell you for your satisfaction that a woman who is watched over is half won, and that the churlishness of fathers or husbands has at all times forwarded the success of lovers. I intrigue very little—it is not in my line, and I have no pretension

* An author's licence predicting that the child who was only born five months later would be a boy.

to gallantry—but I have helped many of those hunters after love and pleasure, and they have often told me that their greatest joy was to meet with one of those churlish husbands who never come home without scolding, with one of those out-and-out brutes who, without thought or reason, condemn the conduct of their wives in everything, and who, standing proudly upon a husband's rights, openly fall out with them in the presence of their lovers. We know, they have told me, how to make the best of such advantages; the resentment of the lady at such outrageous treatment, and the gentle compassion of the lover who witnesses it, afford ample opportunities to push matters forward; in short, the severity of Isabelle's guardian is a most favourable circumstance.

VAL. But yet for four months now have I loved her tenderly, without being able to find a single opportunity of speaking to her.

ERG. Love, it is said, sharpens our inventive genius, but it does not seem to have done much for you. If I had been

VAL. But what could you have done, since she is never to be seen without this brute, and there are neither male nor female servants in the house, who, for the tempting bait of some reward, could be influenced to serve my passion.

ERG. Does she not yet know that you love her?

VAL. That I cannot tell you. Wherever this churl has carried her, she has always seen me after her like a shadow, and my looks have endeavoured day after day to impart to her the violence of my love. My eyes have spoken, but who can tell if they have succeeded in making themselves understood?

ERG. It is true that this language, without either writing or speech to interpret it, may sometimes be obscure.

VAL. What shall I do to escape this dreadful misery? How shall I know if the fair one has seen that I love her? Tell me some means

ERG. That we must find out. Let us go into your house a little while to consider the matter more at leisure.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—ISABELLE, SGANARELLE.

SGA. Yes, yes, I know the house already, and I shall recognise the man at once from the description you give me of him.

ISA. (*aside*). O Heavens! be propitious to me, and favour the artful contrivance of an innocent love.

SGA. You say you were told that his name is Valère?

ISA. Yes.

SGA. Don't be anxious, leave it to me. I will go and speak at once to the thoughtless young fellow.

ISAB. (*aside*). This is a bold project for a young girl, but the unjust severity with which I am treated will be sufficient excuse with every right-minded person.

(*Exit.*)

SCENE II.—SGANARELLE.

Let us lose no time. (*knocks at VALÈRE's door*) It is here. Who goes there? What am I saying?—Hallo, I say! hallo! somebody, hallo! After this discovery I don't wonder that he addressed me so meekly just now. But I shall do for him and his foolish hope quickly enough . . .

SCENE III.—VALÈRE, SGANARELLE, ERGASTE.

SGA. (*to ERGASTE, who has come out suddenly*). The lumbering ox, to come and stick himself before me like a post! He nearly knocked me down. Plague take him!

VAL. Sir, I am very sorry . . .

SGA. Ah! it is for you I was looking.

VAL. For me, sir?

SGA. You. Isn't your name Valère?

VAL. Yes.

SGA. I should like to have a few words with you, if you have no objection.

VAL. Can I be so happy as to be of service to you?

SGA. No, on the contrary, my intention is to do you a good turn; that is why I come to your house.

VAL. To my house, sir?

SGA. To your house. What is there for you to be so surprised about?

VAL. I have reason to be so, and my soul is transported with delight at the honour

SGA. No more about that honour, please.

VAL. Will you not come in?

SGA. There is no need of that.

VAL. I beg of you, sir

SGA. No, I shall go no further.

VAL. We can hardly talk if you stop here.

SGA. I shall not stir a step.

VAL. Well! I must yield; quick, bring a seat here, since the gentleman wishes it.

SGA. No, I shall speak standing.

VAL. What! I receive you in that fashion!

SGA. Yes, what a terrible fuss.

VAL. Such incivility on my part would be inexcusable.

SGA. Still it is a greater incivility not to listen to people who want to speak to you.

VAL. I must needs obey then.

SGA. You could not do better. (*they make great show of reluctance about putting on their hats*) Really so much ceremony is hardly needed; will you, or will you not, listen to me?

VAL. Certainly, with all my heart.

SGA. Do you know that I am the guardian of a young and tolerably handsome girl who lives in this neighbourhood and is called Isabelle?

VAL. Yes.

SGA. If you know it, I have not the pleasure of telling you anything new. But do you know as well, that, fully aware of her charms, I do not mean to remain satisfied with being her guardian, and that she is destined to the honour of being my wife?

VAL. No.

SGA. Then, this is news to you, and, for the future, you will, if you please, avoid troubling her with your love.

VAL. I, sir?

SGA. Yes, you. Come, lay aside all dissimulation.

VAL. Who has told you that I was in love with her?

SGA. People who have a right to be believed.

VAL. But still?

SGA. She herself.

VAL. She herself?

SGA. She herself. Is that clear enough? She has loved me from her childhood, and, like an honest girl, she has just laid the whole matter before me. She has asked me to let you know that, since she is followed everywhere by you, her heart, deeply offended at your conduct, has but too well understood the language of your eyes; that your secret desires are plain enough to her, and that it is troubling yourself needlessly for you to give any further expression to your affection, which offends the love she reserves for me.

VAL. It is she, you say, who of her own accord sends you

SGA. To give you this piece of advice. Having seen the ardent passion which disturbs your mind, she would have let you know sooner what she thought, if in the great distress of her heart she had found one to whom she could entrust such a message. However, the torture of such secrecy forced her at last to have recourse to me to inform you, as I have told you already, that her heart is entirely mine, that you have looked at her enough, and that if you have ever so little sense you will change your course of action. This is all I had to tell you; so good-bye till we meet again.

VAL. (*aside*). Ergaste, what do you say to such an occurrence?

SGA. (*aside*). This is a surprise for him!

ERG. (*aside to VALÈRE*). My belief is, that there is nothing in it that ought to displease you. In my opinion some cunning mystery is hidden under all this. Such a message cannot come from a person who wishes to see your love for her cease.

SGA. (*aside*). He is taken in his own net!

VAL. (*aside*). You think it strange that

ERG. (*aside*). Yes, but he is looking at us, let us avoid his presence.

(*Exeunt VALÈRE and ERGASTE.*)

SCENE IV.—SGANARELLE (*alone*).

How his countenance shows his confusion! He did not expect such a message. Let us call Isabelle; she is a proof of what education can do. Her heart is so much taken up with thoughts of virtue that it is offended if a man merely looks at her.

SCENE V.—ISABELLE, SGANARELLE.

ISA. (*aside as she enters*). I fear lest my lover, full of his passion, should hardly have understood all my meaning; so, prisoner as I am, I will send him a new message, which will more thoroughly enlighten him.

SGA. I am back, you see.

ISA. Well?

SGA. Your message had full success, it settled the fellow's business for him. At first he tried to deny that his heart was touched, but when I told him you had sent me yourself, he was struck dumb. I don't think he will begin again.

ISA. Ha! what do you say? I greatly fear, on the contrary, that he is bent upon annoying us still more.

SGA. What makes you think so?

ISA. You had hardly left the house, when going to the window to breathe a little fresh air, I saw a young man turn the corner of the street. He came straight to me, and suddenly wishing me good morning on the part of this impertinent fellow, threw straight into the middle of my room a box containing a note folded* like a love-letter. I hastened to try and throw the whole back to him, but he had already disappeared from the street. I feel dreadfully vexed about the whole business.

SGA. Did you ever hear of such impudence and knavery?

ISA. It is my duty to return at once both box and letter to this troublesome lover, and I want for that purpose some one . . . for I could not ask you to . . .

* *Poulet*: love-letters seem often to have been folded so as to form two points, like the two wings of a chicken.

SGA. On the contrary, my darling, you thus give me proofs of confidence and love, and I accept the offer with joy. You give me more pleasure in all this than I can express.

ISA. Here they are then.

SGA. All right. Let us see what the knave has written to you.

ISA. Oh! heavens! take care not to open it

SGA. Why not!

ISA. Would you have him believe that it was I who did it? An honourable woman should never yield to the temptation of reading the love-letters a man sends to her. The curiosity which she would show by so doing, betokens that she takes secret pleasure in the soft twaddle. No; this letter sealed as it is, must at once be sent back to him, so that he may know the utter contempt I feel for him. By this means his love will lose all hope, and this folly will cease.

SGA. There's no doubt about it, she is right in what she says. I assure you that your virtue and prudence delight me. I see that my instructions have taken deep root in your heart; you show yourself worthy of being my wife.

ISA. I would not, however, do anything contrary to your wishes; you have the letter in your hand, you may open it.

SGA. No, no, I would not do it on any account; the reasons you give me are only too good, and I will at once discharge the trust you put in me. Afterwards I have just a word or two to say to a friend; then I will return directly and set your heart at ease. *(Exit ISABELLE.)*

SCENE VI.—SGANARELLE (*alone*).

With what rapture does my heart overflow to find her so good! She is a treasure of honour in my house! She takes a glance of love for an insult! She receives a love-letter as the greatest affront, and sends it back by me! I should like to know how my brother's ward would have acted under a similar temptation. Upon my word now, girls are only what you teach them to be.

(Knocks at VALÈRE'S door.)

SCENE VII.—SGANARELLE, ERGASTE.

ERG. What is it?

SGA. Here, take this, and tell your master in future not to be troubling his head about writing love-letters and sending them in golden caskets. Isabelle is very angry about it. See for yourself; she has not even opened the box. He can judge by that, what regard she pays to his love, and what success he may hope for.

(Exit SGANARELLE.)

SCENE VIII.—VALÈRE, ERGASTE.

VAL. What has that surly brute just given you?

ERG. This letter, sir, which he says Isabelle received from you with this box, and about which she is very angry. She has returned it without even opening it. Read it quickly, and let us see if what I surmise is true. (*reads*) "*I have no doubt that this letter will surprise you, and that you will think it very bold in me to have written and sent it as I have done. I find myself in such a position that I am compelled to observe forms no longer. An odious marriage with which I am threatened, and which is to take place in six days, renders me desperate; and, determined to free myself by any means, I feel that I would rather trust you than give way to despair. But yet you must not think that you are wholly indebted to my sad destiny for what I have done. It is not the constraint I am under which has given birth to the feelings I have for you, it has only hastened their avowal, and has forced me to forget the reserve my sex claims from me. It depends entirely on you to make me yours, and I am only waiting to know what your love intends to do, to tell you what resolution I have taken. But above all things remember that time is short, and that two loving hearts need but few words to understand each other.*"

ERG. Well, sir, is not this an original scheme? She does not lack cunning for so young a girl. Who would have believed her capable of such love-tricks?

VAL. Ah! she is perfectly adorable! This proof of intelligence greatly increases my love, and adds to the feelings which her beauty inspires . . .

ERG. Here comes the dupe; mind what you say to him.

SCENE IX.—SGANARELLE, VALÈRE, ERGASTE.

SGA. (*thinking himself alone*). Thrice blessed be this edict* by which extravagance of dress is forbidden! The troubles of husbands will no longer be so great, and wives will have a bridle on their demands. Oh! how grateful I am to the king for this decree! and how I wish, for the sake of these same husbands, that coquetry were forbidden as well as lace and embroidery! I have purposely bought a copy of the decree that Isabelle may read it to me aloud, and it will be our diversion after supper, when her work is over. (*seeing VALÈRE*) Well, fair-haired gentleman, will you again send golden boxes with love-letters? You thought, no doubt, you had to do with some young flirt fond of intrigue, and ready to listen to your soft speeches. You see how your presents are received! Believe me, you are spending your powder in vain. She is virtuous, she loves me, and your pursuit insults her. Look somewhere else, I say, and pack yourself off.

VAL. Yes, yes, I mean to do so. Every one must acknowledge that your merit is too serious an obstacle; it would be madness in me, sincere as my affection is, to dispute the love of Isabelle with you.

SGA. You are right; it is simple madness.

VAL. I should certainly not have suffered myself to be smitten, if I could have foreseen that my miserable heart would have found so formidable a rival.

SGA. I believe it.

VAL. There is no hope left for me now; I give way to you, sir, without murmuring.

SGA. You are right there.

VAL. You have justice on your side, and so many virtues shine in your person that I should be wrong to feel vexed because of the tender feelings Isabelle has for you.

SGA. That is self-evident.

VAL. Yes, yes, I give place to you. But, sir, I beg of

* This edict was published for the second time on the 20th April, 1661. 'L'Ecole des Maris' was acted on the 24th June, 1661. It prohibited, in the name of the king, all superfluous expenses: the use of golden and silver tissues, whether of real silver and gold or not, embroidery, &c.

you, as the only favour of a wretched lover whose whole misery is caused by you, to assure Isabelle that the love which I have had for her these three months has been pure and without blemish. Never have I had a single thought which might offend her honour.

SGA. Yes.

VAL. As I have but my own inclinations to gratify, all my wish was to obtain her for a wife, had not the love she feels for you proved an invincible obstacle to my blameless passion.

SGA. Very good.

VAL. Tell her that, happen what may, she must not think that I can ever forget her. Tell her that, whatever may be the decree of Heaven, I shall love her till I draw my last breath. In short, that it is the just respect I have for your merit which alone checks my pursuit.

SGA. You speak like a wise man. I will at once go and tell her all you have said, for it cannot offend her. Only believe me, do all you can to drive this passion out of your head. Good-bye.

ERG. (to VALÈRE). The silly gull.

(*Exit VALÈRE and ERGASTE.*)

SCENE X.—SGANARELLE (*alone*).

So full of love, I really pity him, poor fellow! It was a misfortune for him to think of taking a fortress which I have conquered.

(*SGANARELLE knocks at his door.*)

SCENE XI.—SGANARELLE, ISABELLE.

SGA. Never was a lover so disturbed at the sight of the love-letter returned to him unopened. He has lost all hope and has withdrawn his claim. But he earnestly begged of me to tell you that if he loved you, he at least never had a single thought that might offend your honour. That, being at liberty to follow his own inclinations, his only wish was to obtain you for his wife, if the love you have for me had not proved an invincible obstacle to his pure passion. He begs you to remember that, happen

what may, he will love you to his last breath, and that it is the just respect he has for my merit which alone checks his love. These are his own words, and far from blaming him, I think him a very honest fellow, and sincerely pity him for thus loving you.

ISA. (*aside*). It is just what I expected from him; I felt from his looks that his love was innocent and pure.

SGA. What do you say?

ISA. That I think it very hard you should pity a man I utterly abhor, and that if you loved me as much as you pretend, you would feel how greatly his love offends me.

SGA. But he was ignorant of your feelings, and his love being so honest in its nature, does not deserve . . .

ISA. What! do you call that having honest motives, to intend running away with me? Is it like a man of honour to form plans to get me out of your hands and marry me by force? Am I a girl to endure life after such disgrace?

SGA. What? What's that you say?

ISA. That I have heard how this treacherous lover talks of carrying me away by force. I do not know by what secret means he learnt your intention of marrying me in a week at the latest, since I only heard it from you yesterday; but I am told that he means to anticipate the day which is to unite me to you for ever.

SGA. Goodness me! that doesn't sound nice.

ISA. Oh! I beg your pardon; he is a very honest man who only feels for me . . .

SGA. He is very wrong; and this is beyond a joke.

ISA. Believe me, it is your gentleness which encourages his folly. If just now you had spoken sharply to him, he would be afraid of your anger and of my resentment. For observe, that it is since I returned his despised letter that he has spoken of this design which shocks me so much. I am told that he still nurses the idea that my heart cherishes him, and that I do all I can to avoid marrying you, and that I should be glad to be out of your power.

SGA. He must be mad.

ISA. He can dissemble well enough, and be assured that his intention is to deceive you. Believe me the traitor

imposes upon you with his fair speeches. I am very unfortunate, I must say, that in spite of all my anxiety to live with honour and to repulse the addresses of a base seducer, I find myself exposed to the mortification of seeing his infamous attempts.

SGA. Nay, nay, do not fear.

ISA. Well, mind, I tell you that unless you show yourself exceedingly angry at so impudent an attempt, and quickly find out some way to rid me of the persecution of such a rash fool, I will give up everything, and flee from the vexation of receiving affronts from him.

SGA. There, there, do not trouble yourself so much, my dear little wifey. I will go to him, and read him a good lecture.

ISA. Be sure you tell him that it is of no use his denying it; that I heard of his intentions on good authority, and that after this, whatever he undertakes, I defy him to surprise me. In short, without losing any more time and sighs, he must be told what my feelings are for you, and that if he will avoid a misfortune, he must not wait to be told twice what he has to do.

SGA. I will say what is right and proper.

ISA. Yes, do so, but in a tone which will show him that you are in earnest.

SGA. I will forget nothing, I warrant you.

ISA. I shall wait for your return with great impatience; pray make all the haste you can. I pine when you are for one moment out of my sight.

SGA. Don't be anxious, my pet, my darling; I shall be back directly.
(Exit ISABELLE.)

SCENE XII.—SGANARELLE (*alone*).

Is there in the world a better and more discreet woman? Ah! how happy I am! how delighted I feel at finding a wife to my taste. Yes, so should all women be, and not like some I know, those downright flirts who allow themselves to be courted and who cause their husbands to be pointed at with scorn throughout Paris. (*knocks at VALÈRE's door.*) Hallo! within! A word with you, our bold lover.

SCENE XIII.—VALÈRE, SGANARELLE, ERGASTE.

VAL. May I ask, sir what brings you again?

SGA. Your own folly.

VAL. How, what do you mean?

SGA. You know very well what I mean, and, to speak plainly, I thought you had more sense. You come and amuse me with your fine words, and in secret retain your own foolish hopes. Now, look here, I fain would treat you kindly, but you force me at last to get into a passion with you. Are you not ashamed, you a gentleman, to form such projects and to think of carrying off a virtuous girl and of preventing a marriage on which depends the whole happiness of her life?

VAL. Who told you this wonderful news, sir?

SGA. Come, no dissimulation, I have it from Isabelle, who for the last time sends you word by me, that she has shown you plainly enough what her choice is; that her heart, entirely devoted to me, is offended at such an outrageous scheme; that she would rather die than suffer such an insult; and that you will be the cause of a terrible misfortune if you do not put an end to this uncomfortable state of things.

VAL. If what I have just heard is true, I must confess that my love has no more to hope for. These expressions are clear enough to show me the end of all hope, and I must bow before the sentence she has pronounced.

SGA. If? Do you doubt it then, and do you suspect the truth of all the complaints I have brought to you from her? Do you wish to hear from her own lips what she has to say? I am most willing if by such means I can force you to recognise your error. Follow me, you shall see if I have added anything, and if her young heart hesitates between us. *(Knocks at ISABELLE'S door.)*

SCENE XIV.—ISABELLE, SGANARELLE, VALÈRE, ERGASTE.

ISA. What! you bring him to me! What do you mean? Do you take his part against me, and, charmed as you are with his rare qualities, do you wish to force me to love him and to endure his visits?

SGA. Not so, my dear, the possession of your heart is too precious to me for that. But he takes all I say for an idle tale. He believes that I have made it all up, and that I cunningly give him my own ideas as if they were yours; that it is I who represent you as full of hatred towards him and of tenderness towards me. I would therefore have you cure him for ever of a mistake which encourages his love.

ISA. (*to VALÈRE*). What! has not my heart clearly shown itself to you, and can you still be doubtful as to whom it is I love?

VAL. Indeed, madam, all that this gentleman has said as coming from you, may well have surprised me. I have doubted, I acknowledge, and the final resolution which decides the fate of my devoted love is of such importance to me, that I must be forgiven if my heart desires to hear it once again.

ISA. No, no, such a decision should not surprise you, he has told you the real feelings of my heart, and I think them founded on too much justice for me to hesitate to show how sincere they are. Yes, I will have it known, and I have a right to be believed, that there are present before me two men who, calling forth in me very different feelings, are the cause of all the agitations of my soul. The one, through a reasonable choice and ideas of honour has all my esteem and all my tenderness; the other, as the only reward of his affection, has all my anger and aversion. The presence of the one is delightful and dear to me, and fills my heart with joy; the presence of the other inspires my heart with secret emotions of hatred and horror. To see myself the wife of one is all my desire; but I had rather lose my life than belong to the other. But this is a sufficient declaration of what my true sentiments are, and I have languished too long under this cruel torture. He whom I love must now exert himself, and deprive of all hope him whom I hate, and, by a happy marriage, deliver me from a life of torment more dreadful to me than death itself.

SGA. Yes, darling, I intend to satisfy your wish.

ISA. Thus only can I be made happy.

SGA. You shall be so very shortly, believe me.

ISA. I know that it does not become a girl to express her wishes so freely.

SGA. Never mind, never mind that.

ISA. But in the condition in which I am placed, such liberty must be allowed me, and I can without blushing make such a tender confession to him I already consider my husband.

SGA. Yes, my poor ducky, my pretty lamb.

ISA. Let him then think of proving his love to me.

SGA. Yes, yes, kiss my hand.

ISA. Without any more sighs, let him conclude a union which I long for, and receive here the promise I make, never to listen to the vows of another (*pretends to embrace SGANARELLE, and gives VALÈRE her hand to kiss*).

SGA. Hai, hai, my pretty popsy, my little sweetie, you shall not languish long, I promise you. (*to VALÈRE*) There say no more, you see that I am not prompting her, and that she cares for none but me.

VAL. Madam, your meaning is plain enough. I see by your words what you expect from me, and I shall ere long remove him you hate so much from before you.

ISA. You could not give me greater pleasure; for in fact that presence is intolerable, it is odious to me, and the horror is so great

SGA. Eh! eh! gently.

ISA. Do I offend you in speaking so freely, do I ?

SGA. No, no, I don't say that; but to tell you the truth, I pity his misfortune, and you show your aversion too strongly.

ISA. I cannot show it too much on such an occasion.

VAL. You shall be satisfied. In three days your eyes shall no longer be offended with the sight of an object so odious to you.

ISA. Heaven grant it! Farewell.

SGA. (*to VALÈRE*). I pity your misfortune, but

VAL. No, you need not trouble yourself, you will hear no repining from me; this young lady certainly does us both justice, and I shall do my best to satisfy her wishes. Farewell.

SGA. Poor fellow! you are terribly tried, I must say. Come, embrace me, for I feel deeply for you (*embraces VALÈRE*).

SCENE XV.—ISABELLE, SGANARELLE.

SGA. I really think he is much to be pitied.

ISA. Not a bit of it.

SGA. But I must say that your love touches me greatly, dearie, and I wish to reward it; a week is too long for your impatience, I will marry you to-morrow, and will not invite

ISA. To-morrow?

SGA. Your modesty makes you affect to draw back, but I see pretty well what joy the thought of the marriage gives you, and that you would like to see it already over.

ISA. But

SGA. Let us go and prepare everything for our happy wedding.

ISA. (*aside*). O Heaven! inspire me with some means of averting it!

ACT III.

SCENE I.—ISABELLE (*alone*).

Yes, death would be a thousand times less to be dreaded than this fatal marriage with which I am threatened, and in everything I am obliged to do to avoid it, I shall surely find indulgent censors. Time presses, it is night, I will go without any fear, and trust the man I love.

SCENE II.—SGANARELLE, ISABELLE.

SGA. (*speaking to somebody in his house*). I am soon back, you see. You will get me ready for to-morrow

ISA. O Heavens!

SGA. Is it you, darling? Where are you going so late? You told me when I left you, that being a little tired you wanted to go and shut yourself up in your room. You even asked me that when I returned, I should let you rest till to-morrow morning.

ISA. I did so, but

SGA. But what?

ISA. You see me in a great state of mind, and I hardly know how to explain it all to you.

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SGA. How! what can this mean?

ISA. A strange secret. It is my sister who forces me to go out, and who, for a scheme I do not approve of, and for which I strongly blamed her, has asked me to let her have my room, where I have locked her up.

SGA. How is this?

ISA. Would you believe it? she is in love with the very man whom we have dismissed to day.

SGA. In love with Valère?

ISA. Yes, desperately in love; it is a strange and overpowering passion; you can judge of the strength of it by her coming quite alone at this time of night to tell me all about it. She says, she certainly shall die if she cannot obtain him whom her soul desires; that for more than a year they have cherished a secret love in their hearts, and that even at the beginning they had engaged themselves to each other by a mutual promise of marriage

SGA. The good-for-nothing girl!

ISA. Having learnt to what despair I had driven her lover, she came to beseech me to allow her to prevent him from going away, for it would break her heart, she said. She wants to speak to her lover under my name, at the window of my room which looks into the little street. Counterfeiting my voice, she will say a few kind words to him to give him hope and make him stay. In short, she will try and gain over for herself the love which he is known to have for me.

SGA. And what do you think of that?

ISA. I? I was dreadfully angry with her. What! sister, said I, are you mad? Do you not blush to feel so much love for one of those fickle and worthless fellows? Are you not ashamed to forget what you owe to your sex, and to deceive the hopes of a man whom Heaven has destined to be your husband?

SGA. But he richly deserves it, and I am delighted to hear of it.

ISA. What shall I say? I told her in my vexation all I could possibly think of: I reproached her for such base conduct, and tried to refuse her request for to-night. But she besought me so earnestly, she shed so many tears, she uttered so many sighs, she repeated so often that I

should drive her to despair if I refused what she asked, that at last I found myself forced to yield to her entreaties. In order, therefore, to palliate this night intrigue to which a tenderness for my own flesh and blood has induced me to submit, I was going to fetch Lucretia, whose virtues I hear you extol every day, to come and sleep with me, but you surprised me by your sudden return.

SGA. No, no, I will have no such underhand doings in my house. I would consent to it so far as it concerns my brother, if it were not that they might be seen by somebody in the street. She whom I am to honour with my person must not only be virtuous and well bred, but must not even be suspected. Let us go and drive out the shameless creature; and as to her passion

ISA. Spare her such pain and confusion. She would blame me, and rightly, for my want of discretion in telling you of the affair. Since I must not countenance her project, allow me at least to tell her so myself and to send her away.

SGA. Very well, let it be so.

ISA. But, above all things, hide yourself, I beg of you, and let her go out without saying anything to her.

SGA. I will do thus much for your sake. But as soon as she has passed my door, I shall immediately go and find my brother. I shall dearly enjoy the fun of telling him of this affair.

ISA. I beseech you not to mention my name. Good-night, I shall shut myself up at once.

(*Exit ISABELLE.*)

SGA. (*alone*). Till to-morrow, my beloved : . . . How impatient I am to see my brother, and to tell him of his good luck! In spite of all his sapient rubbish, the old man is caught! I would not have missed this for twenty crown pieces.

ISA. (*within the house*). Yes, sister, I greatly feel for you, but what you ask of me is impossible. My honour, which is dear to me, is too much endangered. Farewell, go home before it be too late. (*Comes out.*)

SGA. She is, I think, fuming and fretting in fine style. For fear she should come back, suppose I lock the door.

ISA. (*aside*). O Heaven! do not abandon me in my attempt.

SGA. (*aside*). Where can she be going? I shall follow her.

ISA. (*aside*). Dark night, at least, favours me in my distress.

SGA. (*aside*). What! to her lover's house! What does she mean to do?

SCENE III.—VALÈRE, ISABELLE, SGANARELLE.

VAL. (*coming out hastily*). Yes, yes, I will try to-night, and see what I can do to speak . . . Who is there?

ISA. (*to VALÈRE*). Hush! make no noise, Valère, I have anticipated you. I am Isabelle.

SGA. (*aside*). You lie, you wretch; you are not Isabelle; she follows too strictly the laws of honour which you forsake. You assume falsely both her name and her voice.

ISA. (*to VALÈRE*). Only you promise that a marriage shall . . .

VAL. Yes, it is the only wish of my heart, and I make you here a solemn promise that to-morrow I will go wherever you please, to receive your hand.

SGA. (*aside*). Poor cheated fool!

VAL. Go in without fear. I now defy the power of your duped Argus, and rather than give you up to him, my arm shall pierce his heart through and through.

SCENE IV.—SGANARELLE (*alone*).

You need not fear me! Ah! I assure you I have no wish to take from you the shameless creature, victim of her own passion. I am not jealous of what you promise her, and if my advice is followed, you shall indeed be her husband. Yes, he shall be discovered with this brazen-faced creature. The justly respected memory of her father, as well as the great interest I take in the sister, require at least that I should endeavour to preserve her honour.

(*He knocks at the door of a COMMISSARY.*)

SCENE V.—SGANARELLE, A COMMISSARY, NOTARY, ATTENDANT
with a torch.

COM. What is it?

SGA. Good evening, sir, your official presence is necessary here. Please follow me and lend us your help.

COM. We were just going out.

SGA. It is on somewhat urgent business.

COM. What is it?

SGA. It will be necessary for you to go in here and surprise two people who must be joined together in the bonds of matrimony. It is a girl belonging to us, whom a certain Valère has deceived, and enticed into his house with a promise of marriage. She comes from a noble and virtuous family, but

COM. If that is the case, it is fortunate we have met, for I have a notary with me.

SGA. What, this gentleman?

NOT. Yes, I am a public notary.

COM. And moreover a man of honour.

SGA. That is a matter of course. Step into this doorway, make no noise, and see that nobody leaves the house. You will be fully rewarded for your trouble, but do not allow anyone to grease your palms.

COM. What! do you think that an officer of justice . . .

SGA. I do not mean by that to cast a slur on your calling. I will go and fetch my brother at once, only just lend me your light a moment. (*aside*) I shall gladden his heart, the dear charitable easy-going man.

(*Knocks at ARISTE's door.*)

SCENE VI.—ARISTE, SGANARELLE.

ARIS. Who's there? Ah, brother! is that you? What do you want?

SGA. Come along, you fine manager of other people's affairs; come, my superannuated exquisite, I have something very pretty to show you.

ARIS. What?

SGA. I bring you most excellent news.

ARIS. What is it?

SGA. Kindly let me know where your Léonor is?

ARIS. Why do you ask? She is, I believe, at a ball given at a friend's house.

SGA. Ha! no doubt; yes, yes, follow me, I will show you to what ball the damsel is gone.

ARIS. What are you about?

SGA. You have trained her up well! No, it is no good to live like a severe censor, for gentleness wins the heart; and distrust, locks and iron bars do not make a wife or daughter virtuous. Their sex require a little liberty, and we tempt them to do wrong when we treat them with harshness. Truly she has taken her fill of this same liberty, and virtue with her is very accommodating.

ARIS. What may be the drift of all this?

SGA. Come, come, elder brother, it serves you right, and were it to cost me twenty pistoles I would not have you lose the fruit of your absurd maxims. We can plainly see what our different teaching has produced in the two sisters; the one runs away from every lover, the other runs after them.

ARIS. If you would only make this enigma more clear to me.

SGA. The enigma is that her ball is at Valère's house; I saw her going there myself, and at the present time she is in his arms.

ARIS. Who?

SGA. Léonor.

ARIS. Leave off this jesting, I beseech you.

SGA. I jesting! . . . Ah! you amuse me with your ideas! poor silly soul! I tell you that Valère has your Léonor at the present moment in his house; that they were engaged by a mutual promise before he thought of courting Isabelle. Shall I repeat it?

ARIS. What you say is so unlikely to . . .

SGA. He will not believe it even if he sees it with his eyes! You will drive me crazy, I believe. Upon my word, age is not of much use when one has not this (*laying his finger upon his forehead*).

ARIS. What do you want me to . . . ?

SGA. Bother! I don't want you to . . . anything. You shall soon be satisfied, you shall see if I am imposing upon you, and if they have not pledged their troth for more than a year.

ARIS. How is it likely that she should have made such an engagement without telling me of it, when from her childhood up I have always encouraged her to full confidence, and when I have promised her many times that I would never force her inclinations!

SGA. Well, your own eyes shall judge. I have brought the commissary and the notary, for it is our interest that her honour should be saved by an immediate marriage. I do not suppose you are base enough to wish to marry her yourself with such a stain on her character. But perhaps you have some new argument to prove yourself beyond the reach of ridicule.

ARIS. I should be sorry to be weak enough to desire the possession of her heart against her will. But yet, I cannot believe . . .

SGA. Ah! we shall never have done talking. Come along.

SCENE VII.—THE COMMISSARY, THE NOTARY, SGANARELLE,
ARISTE.

COM. There is no necessity here for compulsion, gentlemen, and if all you wish is that a certain marriage should take place, you need not be uneasy, for they both wish to marry, and Valère, as far as you are concerned, has already signed a declaration by which he promises to take her for his wife.

ARIS. The girl . . .

COM. Has locked her door, and refuses to come out until you consent to her wishes.

SCENE VIII.—VALÈRE, THE COMMISSARY, THE NOTARY,
SGANARELLE, ARISTE.

VAL. (*at the window*). No, gentlemen, nor shall anybody come into this house before that consent is given. You know who I am, and I have done what is right in signing

the document which has been shown to you. If you are willing to sanction our union, please to sign; but, if not, remember that you shall kill me rather than deprive me of her I love.

SGA. We have no intention to part you from her.
* (aside) He still believes he has got Isabelle, and we must take advantage of his error.

ARIS. (to VALÈRE). But is it Léonor?

SGA. (to ARISTE). Hush! say nothing.

ARIS. But

SGA. Hold your tongue.

ARIS. I want to know

SGA. Again! Be silent, I tell you.

VAL. In short, whatever may happen, Isabelle has my promise, and I have hers; and, all considered, I do not think I am a match you can disapprove of.

ARIS. What he says does not

SGA. Hold your peace; I have my reasons for it; you will soon know the secret. (to VALÈRE) Yes, we both consent that you shall marry her who is now with you.

COM. It is in these very terms the document is drawn up, and a blank space is left for the name, since we have not as yet seen the young lady. If you will sign, she will do it in her turn without difficulty.

VAL. I agree to this arrangement.

SGA. And so do I, with all my heart. (aside) What good fun we shall have presently! (aloud) Sign, brother; the honour of first doing so belongs to you.

ARIS. But all this mystery

SJA. The deuce! what ceremony! Sign, poor ninny.

ARIS. He speaks of Isabelle, you of Léonor.

SGA. Do you not consent, if it is Léonor, to let them make good their promise to each other?

ARIS. Yes.

SGA. Sign then, I will do the same.

ARIS. Very well, be it so; although I fail to understand (They both sign.)

SGA. You will soon be let into the secret.

COM. We shall be back again presently.

SGA. (to ARISTE). Now, come, I will tell you all about this intrigue. (They retire to the back part of the stage.)

SCENE IX.—SGANARELLE, ARISTE; LÉONOR, LISETTE.

LÉO. O how unbearable it is! How ridiculous and tiresome all those young fools seem to me! I really left the ball because of them.

LIS. Each vied with the other in his wish to please you.

LÉO. For my part, I never met with anything more unpleasant, and I should prefer the simplest talk to all the silly speeches of these empty-headed praters. They believe that all must give way before their flaxen wigs, and think that they have said the cleverest thing in the world when they have alluded, in a wretched, bantering tone, to the love of an old man. Yet, for my part, I value more the affection of such an old man than all the giddy raptures of any young coxcomb. But do I not see . . .

SGA. (to ARISTE). Yes, the matter stands so. (*seeing LÉONOR*) Ah! here she is, and her maid too.

ARIS. Léonor, I do not wish to be angry, but you must acknowledge that I have a right to complain. You know if I have ever wished to force your inclinations, and if I have not many times promised to leave you full liberty. Yet, despising my opinion, you have engaged yourself, and given your love without my knowledge. I do not repent of my indulgence, but your behaviour pains me greatly; my deep affection for you did not deserve such treatment.

LÉO. I do not understand why you should speak to me in this way. Believe me that I am still the same Léonor, and that nothing can alter the deep esteem I have for you; the love of any other would seem a crime in my eyes, and if you wish it, a holy tie shall, as early as to-morrow, unite us for ever.

ARIS. Upon what foundation, then, did you come, brother . . . ?

SGA. What! have you not just left Valère's house? Have you not this very day declared your love? Have you not been in love with him for more than a year?

LÉO. Who could have said such a thing of me? and who has taken the trouble to invent such a lie?

SCENE X.—ISABELLE, VALÈRE, LÉONOR, ARISTE, SGANARELLE,
THE COMMISSARY, NOTARY, LISETTE, ERGASTE.

ISA. Sister, I beg of you generously to forgive me if I have brought any disgrace upon your name. The pressure of a sudden difficulty urged me to this shameful deceit. Your example condemns such a passion as mine, but fate has dealt with us very differently. (*to SGANARELLE*) To you, sir, I shall make no excuse, for I render you a service and do you no wrong. Heaven did not make us for one another; I found myself unworthy of your love, and I preferred to belong to another rather than prove undeserving of a heart like yours.

VAL. (*to SGANARELLE*). For my part, sir, I esteem it my glory and happiness to receive her from your hands.

ARIS. Come, brother, you must bear with this quietly; you have brought it all upon yourself by your strange proceedings. I even fear that you will be so far unfortunate that, although everybody will know you were cheated, no one will pity you.

LIS. In truth, I am delighted with this business, and the reward he receives for his trouble will be a salutary example to others.

LÉO. I do not know if such an action can be approved, but I feel it is impossible to blame it.

ERG. It was predestined that he should be a cuckold; he is so far fortunate that he is one in the bud only.

SGA. (*conquering his dejection somewhat*). No, I cannot recover from my amazement. This odious perfidy is beyond my understanding, and I do not think that Satan himself could be so wicked as this jade. I would have stood up for her against the whole world! Ah! woe to him who, after this, puts his trust in woman! The best are fruitful in wickedness: it is a sex sent here below to be the damnation of us all. I renounce it for ever, and heartily consign it to the devil.

ERG. Good.

ARIS. Let us all go to my house. Come, Valère, tomorrow we will try to appease his anger.

LIS. (*to the audience*). If any of you are acquainted with surly husbands, mind you send them all to our school.

THE BORES.

(LES FÂCHEUX.)

'LES FÂCHEUX' is a character-comedy. It was "planned, written, learnt, and played," Molière himself tells us, in a fortnight. It is almost without plot; the order of the scenes could be changed without injury to the piece. But the variety of the characters and the beauty of the style throughout, won for it an unequivocal success. It is the first attempt at the comedy-ballet. It was acted at Vaux-le-Vicomte, the residence of Fouquet, on the 17th of August, 1661, before the King.

Molière is thought to have acted the three parts of Lisandre, Alcandre, and Alcippe.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.



DAMIS, *guardian to ORPHISE.*

ORPHISE.

ERASTE, *lover to ORPHISE.*

ALCIDOR,	} <i>bores.</i>
LISANDRE,	
ALCANDRE,	
ALCIPPE,	
ORANTE,	
CLIMÈNE,	
DORANTE,	
CARITIDÈS,	
ORMIN,	
FILINTE,	

LA MONTAGNE, *servant to ERASTE.*

L'ÉPINE, *servant to DAMIS.*

LA RIVIÈRE, *and two companions.*

The scene is in a public garden.

THE BORES.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—ERASTE, LA MONTAGNE.

ERAS. Under what star, good heavens, was I born, that I should always find myself the prey of some bore or other! I seem everywhere to meet with them, and every day to discover new specimens. But none ever equalled my bore of to-day; I really thought I should never have got rid of him, and again and again I cursed the harmless wish that had seized me at dinner to go and see the comedy; I had thought to find much to amuse me, but instead, I have been miserably punished for my sins. I must tell you all about it, but I am still boiling over with rage at the thought of my sufferings, and can scarcely speak of the affair calmly. I was on the stage, all ears for the play which I had heard well spoken of by some friends; the actors had begun; the house was in profound silence, when, in comes a blustering fellow with large canons and extravagant manners, who cried out, "Ho, there! give me a seat, and quickly!" He disturbed the audience with the row that he made, and interrupted the play in its finest part. "Good Heavens!" said I, "will Frenchmen, so often rallied about their manners, never behave themselves like sensible men. Must they even play the fool on the public stage, and confirm, by their senseless conduct, what is said of them by all their neighbours!" While I was shrugging my shoulders at the thought of all this, the actors tried to go on again, but the man made a fresh uproar in seating himself, for with long strides crossing over the stage*

* In Molière's time there were places on the stage itself. (Compare p. 377.)

(though he might have been perfectly comfortable on either side) came and stuck his chair right in front, and, with his broad back turned towards the audience, hid the actors from three-fourths of the pit. A general murmur arose from the assembly, which would have shamed any other man, but he, unmoved, took no notice of it, and would have remained where he had planted himself, had he not, as my usual ill-luck would have it, caught sight of me. "Ah! Marquis," he exclaimed, seating himself by me, "how art thou! Allow me to embrace thee." The blood rushed up to my face, to think that people should see I was acquainted with such a vacant ass. Not that I knew him much though; but he is one of those people who base an intimacy upon nothing, whose embraces you must endure when you meet them, and who at once carry their familiarity so far as to "*thou*" and "*thee*" you.* He immediately asked me a hundred foolish questions in a voice which drowned those of the actors. Everybody wished him at the devil, and I, hoping to stop him, gave him to understand that I should be glad to listen to the play. "Thou hast not seen it before then, Marquis? In my opinion it is most comical. I am no fool at that sort of thing; I know by what rules a work is made perfect; and Corneille reads me all he writes." Upon this he gave me a summary of the whole piece, scene after scene, and even repeated, in a loud voice, before the actors could say them, some verses he knew by heart. In vain did I try to restrain him, he made the most of his position. He got up at last, a good while before the play was finished, for men in the fashionable world always take good care never to hear the conclusion. I thanked Heaven, and naturally thought that my misery and the play would end together; but, as if I had come off too cheaply, the man fastened himself on me again. He related to me his exploits and his uncommon virtues; spoke of his horses, of his love-affairs, and of the influence he enjoyed at Court, and offered to render me, with all his heart, any service I could name. I thanked him, bowed meekly, and at every turn watched for a convenient

* See 'Student's' French Grammar' for the use of *tu* in French and the use of *thou* in English.

retreat, but he seeing me on the point of leaving him, said: 'Come, let us go, everybody has left.' Once out of the theatre, to my utter dismay, he said, "Marquis, let us go to the *Cours* and show off my barouche, it is got up in first-rate style, and many a duke and lord has bespoken one of the same make from my coach-builder." I thanked him, and, the better to excuse myself, told him I could not accept his offer, as I had a certain entertainment to give. "Egad," said he, "I will make one of the party, for am I not one of thy friends, and I will disappoint the marshal with whom I had an engagement." "Our fare is not fit to be offered to people of your rank," said I. "Do not mention it," he replied; "I am a man of no ceremony, and I only go to have the pleasure of talking with thee; I take my oath that I am perfectly tired of grand dinners." "But if they expect you," I said, "it will give offence." "Thou art joking, Marquis, we all know each other too well to mind such trifles; I enjoy thy society much more than anybody else's."—I was angry with myself at the poor success of my excuse, and hardly knew what to have recourse to next, in order to get rid of a trouble which was purgatory to me, when a gorgeous coach with footmen before and behind came, after a huge clatter, to a stand-still in front of us. Out of it leaped a young man elaborately got up. My bore and he rushed into each other's arms, and startled the passers-by with the extravagance of their embraces. Whilst they were lost in the convulsions of their civilities, I stole gently away without saying a word; but not without having groaned a long time under the torture, and without having heartily cursed my tormentor, who, with his obstinate officiousness, had prevented my coming to the rendezvous which was given me here.

MONT. These are some of the little troubles mixed up with the pleasures of life. You cannot expect, sir, to have everything exactly as you wish. Heaven has ordained that everyone of us here below should have something to worry him; otherwise we should be too happy.

ERAS. But of all my tormentors, the greatest by far is certainly Damis, the guardian of her I love, who defeats all the hopes she gives me, and forbids her to see me. I

am afraid I have already passed the appointed hour; it is in this shaded alley that Orphise promised I should find her.

MONT. It is not usual in keeping a rendezvous to consider a few minutes more or less.

ERAS. It is true; still I tremble, for in my great love for her, the least thing seems to me a crime against her.

MONT. If the great love for her which you show so well makes a crime even of nothing, in return, the love she has for you makes nothing of all your crimes.

ERAS. But really, do you in good earnest believe that she loves me?

MONT. What! do you still doubt her proved affection?

ERAS. Ah! it is difficult for a heart deeply in love to feel perfectly safe in such a matter. It is afraid of buoying itself up with false hopes; what in its manifold anxieties it most desires is what it believes with most difficulty. But let us think of finding out so rare a beauty.

MONT. Sir, your hands are open in front!

ERAS. Never mind.

MONT. Allow me to put them right, if you please.

ERAS. Ugh! you are strangling me, blockhead; leave them as they are.

MONT. Suffer me to comb your hair a little?

ERAS. Awkward lout! you have almost cut off my ear with your comb.

MONT. Your canions

ERAS. Leave them alone, you are taking far too much trouble.

MONT. They are all crumpled!

ERAS. I prefer them crumpled.

MONT. Allow me at least the favour of brushing your hat? it is covered with dust.

ERAS. Brush it then, since it must be so.

MONT. Would you think of wearing it as it is?

ERAS. Do as you like, but, for Heaven's sake, make haste.

MONT. It would be a shame! *(Takes his hat.)*

ERAS. That will do.

MONT. In a moment!

ERAS. You'll be the death of me.

MONT. Where have you been thrusting yourself?

ERAS. Are you going to keep my hat for ever?

MONT. I have done.

ERAS. Give it me, then.

MONT. (*letting the hat fall*). Oh dear!

ERAS. There, now it's on the ground. You call that helping me? Plague take you!

MONT. Let me but give it a rub or two. I

ERAS. No, I will not. Deuce take all officious servants, who tease their masters, and do nothing but vex them by assuming to be indispensable.

SCENE II.—ORPHISE, ALCIDOR, ERASTE, LA MONTAGNE.

(*ORPHISE is seen going across the further part of the stage, ALCIDOR holding her hand.*)

ERAS. But is not that Orphise I see coming? yes, it is she. Where can she be going so fast, and who is that man with her? (*he bows to her as she goes by and she turns her head away*).

SCENE III.—ERASTE, LA MONTAGNE.

ERAS. What! she sees me plainly and yet she passes without taking any notice of me! What must I believe? What do you say to this? Speak.

MONT. I had rather say nothing, sir, for fear of teasing you.

ERAS. And is it not teasing me, to say nothing when I am undergoing such torture? Give some answer to my anxious heart. What am I to imagine? Speak, what do you think? What is your opinion?

MONT. I shall be silent, sir, I do not wish to assume that I am indispensable.

ERAS. Plague take the impertinent fellow! Go, follow them, see what they do, and do not lose sight of them.

MONT. (*coming back*). I must follow them at a distance, I suppose?

ERAS. Yes.

MONT. (*coming back*). Without their seeing me, or giving them the least sign that I am sent after them?

ERAS. No, no. you had better give them notice that you follow them by my express order.

MONT. (*coming back*). Shall I find you here?

ERAS. May Heaven confound thee, man, for the greatest bore of the lot!
(*Exit LA MONTAGNE.*)

SCENE IV.—ERASTE.

Ah! how anxious I am, and how I wish now I had been hindered from coming here! I expected to find everything propitious; instead of which I feel suddenly plunged into the depths of despair.

SCENE V.—LISANDRE, ERASTE.

LIS. My dear Marquis, I recognised you a long way off, as you stood under those trees, and came to you straight, You are one of my friends, and I must sing to you an air that I have made for a little couranto, and which has so pleased all those who at Court are expert in such matters, that more than twenty persons have already written words to it. I have wealth, birth, a pretty good post, and am reckoned of some importance in France; but I had rather give up all these than not to have made the air which I am going to sing to you (*tries his voice*). La, la, hem. hem: Pay great attention to it, I beg of you (*sings*). Now, is not that fine!

ERAS. Ah!

LIS. The last part of it is pretty (*sings the end four or five times over*). Don't you think so?

ERAS. Very fine, certainly.

LIS. The steps I have adapted to it are not less pleasing, and the figure especially is very graceful (*he sings, talks, and dances at the same time, and makes ERASTE take the part of the lady*). Look, the gentleman crosses so; then the lady; they join; then they separate, and the lady comes there. Do you catch this pretty touch of a feint in it? This fleuret, these coupés running after the fair partner, back to back, face to face, pressing close up to her? Well! what do you say to it, Marquis?

ERAS. These steps are very nice.

LIS. For my part, I have the greatest contempt for all your ballet masters?

ERAS. I see you have.

LIS. Then the steps?

ERAS. Are surprising.

LIS. Would you let me teach you them? I will do so for friendship's sake.

ERAS. To say the truth, just now I am a little anxious about something.

LIS. Very well, it shall be for another time. If I only had the new words with me, we could read them together and see which are the best.

ERAS. It must be for another day.

LIS. Farewell. My dearest Baptiste * has not yet seen my couranto. I must go and find him. His taste and mine correspond exactly, and I shall get him to write an accompaniment to it.
(*Exit singing.*)

SCENE VI.—ERASTE.

Good heavens! must position be a shelter for everything, and must we daily bear the stupidity of a hundred fools, and abase ourselves to admire their folly!

SCENE VII.—ERASTE, LA MONTAGNE.

MONT. Sir, Orphise is alone, and is coming here.

ERAS. Ah! what a state of anxiety I am in! I love her still, the cruel beauty, although my reason tells me I ought to hate her.

MONT. Your reason, sir, does not know what it says, nor what power a beloved one has over our heart. Although we may often have cause to be angry; with a word she soon sets everything to rights again.

ERAS. Alas! I know it, and already at the sight of her all my anger is turned into love.

SCENE VIII.—ORPHISE, ERASTE, LA MONTAGNE.

ORPH. You do not seem very well pleased to see me, Eraste? Does my presence offend you? What is it? What

* Jean Baptiste Lulli.

can be the matter with you? And what trouble makes you sigh when you see me?

ERAS. Alas! can you ask me, cruel one, what cause my heart has to be sad? Is it not unkind of you to affect ignorance of the wrong you have done me? He whose presence made you pass by me

ORPH. (*laughing*). Is that what disturbs you?

ERAS. Add insult to the pain you have given me. Believe me, it ill becomes you to laugh at my distress, and to make use of my weakness for you, ungrateful one, to abuse the love which you know fills my heart.

ORPH. I must laugh, Eraste; and you will acknowledge that you are very absurd to give yourself such uneasiness about nothing. The man you speak of, far from pleasing me, is a troublesome fellow I was endeavouring to get rid of. One of those importunate and officious simpletons who cannot bear to leave any one alone, and who come suddenly with fawning language, to offer you assistance at the most inappropriate time. The better to disguise my intention, I pretended that I was going away, and he took me as far as my carriage. I soon got rid of him in that way, and came in again by the other entrance to find you.

ERAS. May I believe what you say, Orphise? and is your heart sincere to me?

ORPH. Well! Eraste, I think it is too bad of you to talk in that way, when I show you the folly of your complaints; I must say I am very foolish, and my weak kindness

ERAS. Ah! do not be angry with me! I am so much under your sway, that I must needs believe implicitly all you tell me. Deceive your unfortunate lover, if you like, he will respect you even to the tomb. Ill-use his love, refuse him yours, force him to see the triumph of a rival; yes, he will bear with everything from your divine charms; he may die from it, but will never complain.

ORPH. As long as such feelings reign in your heart, I on my side

SCENE IX.—ALCANDRE, ORPHISE, ERASTE, LA MONTAGNE.

ALC. Marquis, a word with you. (*to Orphise*) Madame, I

hope you will pardon my indiscretion in daring to speak to him privately before you. *(Exit ORPHISE.)*

SCENE X.—ALCANDRE, ERASTE, LA MONTAGNE.

ALC. It is with great reluctance, Marquis, that I come to trouble you; but there is a man close by who just now insulted me, and I should consider it a great favour if you would, on the spot, take him a challenge from me. You know that in like circumstance I should be only too ready to oblige you.

ERAS. *(after having considered a little)*. I have no wish to boast, yet it is not the less true, that I was a soldier before being a courtier: I served my country for fourteen years, and I believe I may, without disgrace, refuse what you ask of me, or fear that my refusal to fight will be imputed to cowardice. A duel places men in an awkward position, and our monarch is not a mere shadow of a king.* He knows how to make himself obeyed, even by the greatest in his kingdom; and I think he acts like a wise prince in this matter. I have courage enough to die for him, but not enough to displease him. His will is supreme law to me; find some one else to disobey him. I speak my mind freely to you, Viscount; in anything else I am at your service: Farewell. *(Exit ALCANDRE.)*

SCENE XI.—ERASTE, LA MONTAGNE.

ERAS. May all the bores go to the devil together! Where is the object of my love gone to now?

MONT. I don't know.

ERAS. Search in every direction to know where she is; I'll wait in this alley.

BALLET TO THE FIRST ACT.

First Entry.

Players at Mall, shouting "Look out, look out!" force him to retire. When they have finished, he tries to come back, but

* Eraste alludes to the custom of the seconds fighting. Molière makes use of this opportunity to praise Louis XIV. for his severe edicts against duels: See also 'Don Juan,' Act iii., Sc. iv.

Second Entry.

A number of inquisitive persons come in, who turn round and round him in order to examine him more closely. He is forced to retire again for a short time.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—ERASTE (*alone*).

Are all those plagues dispersed at last? They seem to swarm everywhere; I avoid them, and still they come. To increase my misery I cannot find her I long for. The thunder and rain have quickly passed, and have not dispersed the company. Would that Heaven, among the profuse favours it bestows here below, had but driven away all my tormentors! The sun is sinking fast, I wonder why my servant has not yet returned?

SCENE II.—ALCIPPE, ERASTE.

ALC. Good day to you, Marquis.

ERAS. (*aside*). What! is my love to be crossed for ever?

ALC. Comfort me for the strange partie which I lost yesterday at piquet with one St. Bouvain, to whom I could have dealt and given fifteen points. It's a blow from which I cannot recover. I feel since yesterday as if I could send all players to the devil, and go afterwards and hang myself in the market-place. I only wanted two points, my adversary wanted a pique. I dealt, he took six, and asked me to deal again. I, seeing that I had something pretty good in all suits, refused. Now observe my bad luck. I carry the ace of clubs, the ace, king, knave, ten and eight of hearts, and throw out, as my game lay in point, king and queen of diamonds, ten and queen of spades. To the five hearts in my hand, I added the queen, which gave me a quint-major. But to my great astonishment my opponent, together with the ace, laid on the table a sixième minor in diamonds. I had thrown away the king and queen of the same suit. But as it was all but impossible for him to pique me, I plucked up courage, and thought at least to make two points in play. But he had

four spades as well as the seven diamonds, and on playing his last spade he left me uncertain as to which of my two aces I ought to keep. I, thinking I was doing the right thing, threw away the ace of hearts, but he had discarded all his four clubs, and with a six of hearts capoted me. I could not say a word, my vexation was so great. Confound it all, explain to me this frightful run of ill luck! One must have seen it to believe it.

ERAS. It is in play that one sees most clearly the ups and downs of fortune.

ALC. S'death! you yourself shall be judge whether I am in the wrong, and if it is without just cause that I am angry. But here, I have our two games in my pocket. This is the hand I went out with, as I told you, and here . . .

ERAS. Your description suffices, and I quite understand the anger you feel. But some pressing business calls me away, I must leave you. Good-bye. Try and comfort yourself under your misfortune.

ALC. Who? I? I shall never forget it, I feel crushed by it, I am determined that the whole world shall hear of it. (*goes away a little and returns saying*) The six of hearts! two points!*

(*Exit.*)

ERAS. Good heavens, where am I, that wherever I turn I must meet with fools?

SCENE III.—ERASTE, LA MONTAGNE.

ERAS. What a time you have kept me waiting!

MONT. I could not go faster, sir.

ERAS. But do you bring back any news after all?

MONT. Certainly, and I have something to tell you from her you love so well.

ERAS. Ah! what is it? Speak; my heart longs to know.

MONT. Do you wish that I should tell you?

ERAS. Yes, be quick, tell me at once.

MONT. Wait a moment, sir, if you please, I ran so fast, I am quite out of breath.

ERAS. Do you take pleasure in keeping me in suspense?

* See Notes at end of first volume.

MONT. Since you are so anxious at once to know the order I received from your beloved, I must tell you Upon my word, without boasting of my zeal, I had to run such a long way to find the lady, that if

ERAS. Plague take your digressions!

MONT. Ah, you should moderate your passion a little, and Seneca

ERAS. Seneca is but a fool in your mouth, since he tells me nothing of what I want to know. Repeat what she said, and be quick.

MONT. Your dear Orphise, in order to satisfy you There is an insect entangled in your hair.

ERAS. Leave it there.

MONT. She bids me tell you

ERAS. What?

MONT. Guess.

ERAS. Are you aware that I am in no joking humour?

MONT. Her order is, that you must wait for her in this place, and that she will be sure to come and see you as soon as she can get rid of some of those country ladies who always prove such a plague to the people at Court.

ERAS. I shall stop then in the place she is pleased to appoint. As now I have some leisure, leave me to my thoughts for a while. (*Exit LA MONTAGNE.*) I want to adapt some words to a tune I see she likes (*walks about musing*).

SCENE IV.—ORANTE, CELIMÈNE. ERASTE, *at the side of the stage.*

ORA. Everybody will be of my opinion.

CEL. Do you think to gain your point through obstinacy?

ORA. I believe my reasons are better than yours.

CEL. I wish somebody could hear both your reasons and mine.

ORA. (*seeing ERASTE*). Here is a gentleman who is no ignoramus in those sorts of things, and who will be able to decide between us. Marquis, a word; allow us to appeal to you to be judge in our dispute as to how the most perfect lover is known.

ERAS. That is a difficult question to decide, and you should seek a more skilful judge.

ORA. No, no, you are giving us a foolish excuse. We know well that you are a man of intelligence and discernment; everybody justly calls you

ERAS. Oh! I beg of you

ORA. Not a word more, you must decide between us, it will only take you two minutes.

CEL. (*to ORANTE*). You appeal to a judge who will condemn you, for, if what I think of this gentleman is true, he must perforce give my reasons the victory.

ERAS. (*aside*). Oh! that I could put it into the head of my rascally servant to invent something to get me out of this mess!

ORA. (*to CELIMÈNE*). For my part I have too much confidence in his sound sense to fear his saying anything to my disadvantage. (*to ERASTE*) In short, the great question between us is whether a lover should be jealous?

CEL. Or better, to explain your thoughts and mine: ought a lover who is jealous or one who is not so, to please most?

ORA. For, my part, I am decidedly for the one who is not jealous.

CEL. And in my opinion the one who is jealous has the advantage.

ORA. I think we ought to give most approbation to him who shows the greater respect.

CEL. And I, that if our inclinations are to be shown, it is to him who has the greater love.

ORA. Yes, but the passion which fills a heart, shows itself much better by respect than by jealousy.

CEL. And I believe, on the contrary, that he loves most who shows himself jealous.

ORA. Fie! Celimène! call not those men lovers whose love so much resembles hatred; who, instead of respect and gentle addresses, seem bent upon making themselves hateful; whose minds, ever mastered by a gloomy passion, make a crime of our slightest action; whose blindness makes them ever doubt of our innocence, and who require even a passing glance to be explained; who, if they see the least appearance of sadness in us, complain at once that it

is their presence which calls it forth ; and who, when the least joy brightens our eyes, maintain it is love for their rivals ; in a word, those men, who assuming a privilege from the frenzy of their love, never speak to us but with the intention of quarrelling ; who presume to forbid everybody from approaching us, and who tyrannise even over their conquerors. I prefer a lover who shows respect ; his submission, to my mind, is a surer mark of our power.

CEL. Fie ! Orante ! call not those men lovers whose love causes them no uneasiness, whose lukewarm hearts look forward with calm assurance to the fulfilment of their wishes ; who are never afraid of losing us ; who suffer their love to slumber from over-confidence ; who are friends with their rivals, and who leave an open field to their perseverance. Love so calm excites my anger ; to me, not to be jealous, is not to love. A lover, to prove me his love, ought to be a prey to constant suspicions, and by passionate, sudden outbursts should give an unerring proof of his esteem. I should be flattered by his uneasiness ; and if at times he treated me a little too harshly, the happiness of seeing him submissive at my feet, praying me to forgive his outburst of passion, his tears, his despair at having displeased me, would be a charm sufficient to calm my anger.

ORA. If to you, love without violence is not love, I could name some people in Paris, and a fair sprinkling of them too, who prove the violence of their affection even by blows.

CEL. If to please you there must be no jealousy in a lover, I know some people who would do very well for you, men of so patient a temper that they could see you in the arms of a score of lovers without any feeling of uneasiness.

ORA. (*to ERASTE*). Now, you as judge, must decide which love seems to you preferable.

(*ORPHISE appears at the further end of the stage and sees ERASTE between ORANTE and CELIMÈNE.*)

ERAS. Since nothing less than a judgment will set you at rest, I will satisfy you both, and, not to blame what is praised by either of you, let it be my opinion that he

who is jealous loves most, and he who is not jealous loves best.

CEL. A decision full of wisdom, but

ERAS. Let it suffice, I can say no more. Now, I beg of you, let me go.

SCENE V.—ORPHISE, ERASTE.

ERAS. (*seeing ORPHISE and going to her*). How long you have stayed, and how justly I feel

ORPH. No, do not let me disturb such a pleasant conversation, you surely are in the wrong in accusing me of coming too late (*showing ORANTE and CELIMÈNE, who are going away*), you could easily have dispensed with my visit.

ERAS. You are vexed with me without a cause, and reproach me for what I could not help. Ah, for pity's sake, stop a moment

ORPH. Pray let me go. Hasten to overtake your pleasant company. (*Exit.*)

SCENE VI.—ERASTE.

Good heavens! must the bores of both sexes conspire to-day to frustrate my dearest wishes? But I will follow her in spite of her resistance, and prove my innocence.

SCENE VII.—DORANTE, ERASTE.

DOR. Ah! Marquis, how many bores we meet every day, who come and interrupt the course of our pleasures. You see me enraged at a rather fine hunt which a coxcomb But I must relate it all to you.

ERAS. I am looking for some one here, and cannot stop.

DOR. (*detaining him*). Never mind, I'll give you the details as we go along. Yesterday, a select party of us had made an appointment to hunt a stag; we had gone beforehand and had slept on the spot, that is, as you will understand, my dear fellow, in the depth of the forest. As this sport is my greatest delight, I decided, in order to

have everything done as it should be, to go myself to the covert. We settled to concentrate our efforts upon a stag which somebody said was a warrantable stag. I will not stop to tell you why, but I maintained that it was only a staggart. We had duly arranged our relays, and were breakfasting in haste on some new-laid eggs, when up came to us a raw country gentleman, a long rapier at his side, proudly bestriding a brood mare, which he dignified with the name of "my good mare." We esteemed his presence no great compliment, but, to make matters worse, he put us out of all countenance by presenting to us his great booby of a son, as big a fool as his father. He introduced himself to us as a famous hunter, and begged permission to join us. Heaven preserve every true sportsman from a horn sounding in season and out of season, and from the owner of a dozen mangy curs which he styles his pack of hounds, and who boasts of his own wonderful prowess in hunting! Well, we granted him his request, after due estimation of his qualities, and started to unharbour the stag. Three lengths of the leash off the stag is seen. Tally ho! The hounds are at once laid on; I shout encouragement, and blow a loud blast. My stag breaks cover, passes over a rather wide plain, the hounds after him, but so well together that you could have thrown a handkerchief over them all. He reaches the forest. We throw in the old hounds. I take in haste my chestnut. You know the horse . . .

ERAS. No, I do not think so.

DOR. Not know my chestnut! He's a horse as good as he is good looking. I bought him some few days ago of Gaveau. You know the respect he has for my opinion, and can judge whether he would attempt to take me in. He never sold a better horse, or one whose shape was more faultless. The head of a barb with a clear star; the neck of a swan—tapering and erect. No more shoulder than a hare, and short in the pasterns. His action full of life! His feet—good heavens, his feet! His haunches double! To state a simple fact, I alone found out how to control him; and Gaveau's man John never got on him without trembling, although he put on the best face he could. Hips which for breadth beat all those I ever saw! Legs—ah! ye

gods—legs! In short, he's a wonder! I refused to exchange him against a horse of the king's, although I was offered a hundred pistoles to boot. Well, as I was saying, I mounted, and my joy was extreme at seeing some of the hounds streaming across the plain to cut off the deer. I pressed on, and found myself at the heels of the pack in an outlying thicket. Drécar alone was with me. For an hour our stag was hunted to and fro there. I cheered on the hounds, and made a devil of a noise. At last, never was a hunter more delighted, I started him off myself. All was going on smoothly, when a young stag crossed our path! A part of my hounds followed the new comer. I saw them hesitate, as you can imagine, Marquis; even Finaut was at a loss! Suddenly, to my delight, he turned, and hit off the line. I sounded the horn and shouted, "Finaut! FINAUT!" I caught sight of the slot on a molehill, and some of the hounds were coming back to me, when unfortunately the young stag passed by my friend the country bumpkin. The blunderer began to blow away in fine style, shouting at the top of his voice, "Tally ho! tally ho!" My hounds all left me, and followed the old blockhead; I rushed forward, and saw the slot of a deer on the path; but, my dear fellow, half a glance satisfied me that we had got on the wrong animal. I was awfully put out, and tried to make him see the difference between the print of the hoofs of the right stag and that of the one he was following: but it was all in vain; he stuck to it, like an ignoramus as he is, that we had the stag of the pack. While we were having this dispute, the hounds had time to get a long way off. I was furious, and, cursing the man with all my heart, I urged my horse up and down hill, crashing through the underwood, and bending the young trees as thick as my arm. I lifted the hounds back to the right line, and to my great joy they settled down on the stag, as if he were in full view. But can you imagine what happened next? To tell you the truth, my dear Marquis, it was almost too much for me. Our stag, once more afoot, passed by our man, who thinking to prove himself a true sportsman, and to deserve all praise, shot him straight in the middle of the head with a horse-pistol, and shouted out to me from afar, "Ah! I have brought

the animal down!" Did anybody, O heavens! ever hear of pistols in stag-hunting? As for me, when I reached the spot, the act seemed to me such an extraordinary one, that out of vexation I drove my spurs into my horse's flanks and came straight home as fast as I could, without saying a word to the ignorant ass.

ERAS. You could not have done better, and your wisdom is worthy of all praise. That is the simplest way of ridding oneself of a bore. Good-bye!

DOR. Whenever you feel disposed, we'll go somewhere together, where we shall have no fear of country clowns.

(*Exit.*)

ERAS. Thanks. (*aside*) My patience will not last much longer. I must seek with all diligence to excuse myself to Orphise.

BALLET TO THE SECOND ACT.

First Entry.

Players at bowls stop him to measure a stroke over which they are disputing. He gets rid of them with some difficulty, and leaves them going through a dance in which occur all the postures found in this game.

Second Entry.

Young boys with slings interrupt the dance. These are driven away by

Third Entry.

Cobblers, their wives, their fathers and others. These are driven away in their turn by

Fourth Entry.

A gardener who dances alone and then retires.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—ERASTE, LA MONTAGNE.

ERAS. It is true, my exertions have succeeded in one respect; my beloved has at last relented. But I am being

crushed from another quarter, and the stars have redoubled their malignant fury. Damis, her guardian, the worst of my bores, renews his opposition to my fondest wishes. He has forbidden his lovely niece to see me, and means to marry her to-morrow to another. Orphise, however, in spite of his prohibition, has yielded so far to my love that I have succeeded in persuading her to see me in private in her own house this evening. A lover delights, above all, in secret favours, and thinks it charming to conquer obstacles. The shortest moment passed with the beauty he adores becomes, when forbidden, supreme happiness. I will now go to my appointment; it is almost time, and besides, I had rather be there a little too soon than too late.

MONT. Shall I follow you?

ERAS. No; I fear lest some suspicious eyes should thus discover who I am.

MONT. But

ERAS. I wish you not to come.

MONT. I must obey, but if at least I can at some distance

ERAS. Must I ask you for the twentieth time to hold your tongue? Will you, a valet, never give up your habit of opposing every wish of your master? (*Exit MONTAGNE.*)

SCENE II.—CARITIDÈS, ERASTE.

CAR. Sir, this is not a fit time to do myself the honour of waiting on you, the morning is more suitable for the fulfilment of such a duty; but you are not easily to be met with, for you are always asleep or in town—at least so your people tell me—and my meeting you now is after all a piece of great luck.

ERAS. Do you want anything of me, sir?

CAR. I acquit myself, sir, of my duty to you, and come to Pray, excuse the boldness that inspires me if

ERAS. Tell me what you have to say, without so much ceremony.

CAR. As the rank, the wit, the generosity which everybody praises in you

ERAS. Yes, I get plenty of praise. What do you want of me?

CAR. Sir, a man labours under great disadvantage when he is obliged to introduce himself. He should always be presented to the great by people who know him, whose words, being listened to, unfold what little merit he has. For my part, I should have been glad, sir, if some well-informed man could have told you what I am.

ERAS. It is easy to see what you are, sir; your mode of addressing me shows it plainly enough.

CAR. Yes, I am a scholar charmed with your virtues; not one of those learned men whose names end in *us*—there is nothing so common as a name with a Latin ending—those which are dressed in Greek have a far better look, and that I might have one ending in *ès*, I call myself Mr. Caritidès.

ERAS. Mr. Caritidès by all means. What have you to say to me?

CAR. It is a petition, sir, which I should like to read to you, and which, occupying the place you do at Court, I venture to entreat you to present to the King.

ERAS. But, sir, you are at liberty to present it yourself.

CAR. It is true that the King grants this extreme favour, but, by the very excess of his unparalleled goodness, so many worthless petitions are presented that they stifle the good ones; and my great hope, sir, is that mine will be given to the King when he is alone.

ERAS. Very well, that you can do; you have only to choose your time.

CAR. Ah! sir, those gentlemen-ushers are terrible! They treat men of learning as prigs to be made game of, and I can never get any further than the guard-room. The ill-usage I have had to endure would have made me forswear the Court for ever, if I had not conceived the hope that you would be my Mæcenas to the King. Yes, your credit is a sure means . . .

ERAS. Well, give it me, I will present it.

CAR. Here it is, but please hear it.

ERAS. No.

CAR. I beseech you, sir, in order that you may be instructed in the subject it treats of: (*reads*)

A PETITION TO THE KING.

"SIRE,—

"Your most humble, most obedient, most faithful and most learned subject and servant Caritidès, French by nation, Greek by profession, having considered the great and notorious abuses which are committed in the inscriptions on the signs of houses, shops, taverns, bowling-alleys and other places of your good city of Paris, in that certain ignorant composers of the said inscriptions do subvert by a barbarous, pernicious, and detestable orthography all manner of sense and reason, without any regard to etymology, analogy, energy or allegory whatsoever, to the great scandal of the republic of letters and of the French nation, which is discredited and dishonoured by the said abuses and gross mistakes, in the eyes of strangers, and especially of the Germans, curious readers and inspectors of the said inscriptions"

ERAS. This petition is very long and might displease.

CAR. Oh, sir! not one word of it could possibly be retrenched.

ERAS. Be quick then.

CAR. (*goes on*). *"humbly petitioneth Your Majesty for the good of Your State and the glory of Your Kingdom to create an office of comptroller, surveyor, corrector, reviser and restorer general of the said inscriptions, and therewith to honour the petitioner as well in consideration of his vast and eminent erudition, as for the great and signal services he has rendered to the State and Your Majesty, by making the anagram of Your said Majesty in French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Chaldean, Arabic"*

ERAS. (*interrupting him*). That will do, quick, give it me, and withdraw: the king shall see it, the thing is as good as done.

CAR. Alas! sir, all I ask is that it should be shown; for if the king only sees it, I am sure of success. His justice in everything is so great, that he never could refuse my request. And now, to exalt your renown to the skies,

give me in writing your name and surname, and I will make a poem on it in the form of a double acrostic and in each hemistich.*

ERAS. Yes, you shall have it to-morrow, Mr. Caritidès. (*Exit CARITIDÈS.*) In good sooth such scholars are wonderful asses, and at any other time I should really have been amused with his folly.

SCENE III.—ORMIN, ERASTE.

ORM. Although an affair of great consequence brings me here, I waited till he went before speaking to you.

ERAS. Very well, but make haste, for I want to be gone.

ORM. I have little doubt, sir, but that the man who has just left you wearied you sadly with his visit. He is an importunate old fellow, and is not quite right in the head; I always have ready an excuse to get rid of him. At the Mall, in the Luxembourg, in the Tuileries, he pesters everybody with his whims. Persons like you should always avoid such pedants, for they are good for nothing. As far as I am concerned, sir, I have no fear of being troublesome, for I come to make your fortune.

ERAS. (*aside*). This is some alchemist; one of those people who, possessing nothing, come and promise you untold wealth. (*aloud*) You have found, sir, that wonderful stone which of itself can enrich all the kings of the earth?

ORM. Ah! what a strange notion! Heaven preserve me, sir, from being one of those foolish people. I do not indulge in such frivolous visions; I bring you here the tangible notions of a proposal I wish to communicate to the king by your means, and which I always carry about me safely sealed up. It is none of those foolish plans, and idle fancies which the superintendents are perpetually having dinned into their ears; none of those beggarly schemes from which twenty or thirty millions of francs at the most can be hoped for, but one which, at the lowest computation, will every year bring in to the king at least four hundred

* That is, apparently, at the beginning and end of each line, and the beginning of each half-line.

millions ready money. All this he can easily have without risk or suspicion, and without in any way oppressing his subjects. In a word, the financial scheme I propose will be the source of unbounded wealth. Everyone will be convinced at once of the feasibility of my plan. Yes, provided I have your help

ERAS. Very well, we will talk about it another time; I am rather in a hurry.

ORM. If you would promise me to keep it secret, I would communicate to you this most important financial scheme.

ERAS. No, no, I have no wish to know your secret.

ORM. Sir, I believe you to be too discreet to betray it, and I will tell it you in a couple of words. Just let me see if any one can hear us. *(after having looked round he approaches ERASTE, and whispers in his ear)* This marvellous project of which I am the author is

ERAS. Not so near, sir, and for good reason.

ORM. I need not tell you of the great profits the king derives annually from his seaports. Now, this project which no one has ever thought of, although it is so simple, is to turn all the coasts of France into famous seaports. This would bring in vast sums, and if

ERAS. The proposal is excellent, and will please the king. Farewell, we shall see each other again.

ORM. At least, support me, who was the first to speak of it.

ERAS. Yes, yes.

ORM. If you would have the kindness, sir, to lend me a couple of pistoles, you could repay yourself out of the scheme.

ERAS. *(giving some money to ORMIN)*. Yes, willingly. *(Exit ORMIN.)* Would to Heaven that I could so cheaply get rid of all bores! Could a man choose a worse time for his visit! I hope that at last I shall be able to go out. I wonder if anybody else will come to prevent me!

SCENE IV.—FILINTE, ERASTE.

FIL. Marquis, this is a strange piece of news I have just heard!

ERAS. What?

FIL. That a man has quarrelled with you!

ERAS. With me?

FIL. What is the use of denying it? I have it on good authority that a challenge was sent to you; and as your friend, happen what may, I come to offer you my services against one and all.*

ERAS. I am much obliged to-you, but be assured that you

FIL. You will not acknowledge it, but you are going out without an attendant; therefore, whether you stop in the town or go into the country, I am determined to accompany you.

ERAS. (*aside*). I shall go mad!

FIL. Why be so reserved with your friend?

ERAS. I swear, Marquis, that you are wrongly informed?

FIL. It's useless for you to deny the truth.

ERAS. May the thunder crush me, if I have had any quarrel

FIL. Do you imagine that I believe you?

ERAS. I tell you without disguise that

FIL. Don't fancy that I am so easily duped. I am not so credulous.

ERAS. Oblige me by

FIL. No.

ERAS. I beg of you, leave me.

FIL. By no means, Marquis.

ERAS. A little gallantry, you know, in a certain place, to-night

FIL. I will not leave you; I shall follow you wherever you go.

ERAS. S'death! since you will insist that I have a quarrel, I will prove your words true, to satisfy your zeal; but it shall be with no other than you, for you plague me to distraction, and will not be persuaded to leave me alone.

FIL. You receive very unkindly the service of a friend; but, since I am so unwelcome, I bid you farewell; settle your affairs without me.

ERAS. You will indeed be my friend when you leave me. (*Exit FILINTE.*) Was a man ever so persecuted by mis-

* See the note of Act i., Scene x.

fortune? They have, I verily believe, made me miss my appointment.

SCENE V.—DAMIS, L'EPINE; ERASTE; LA RIVIÈRE, *and his Companions*.

DAM. (*to L'EPINE*). What! the villain hopes to obtain her in spite of me! Ah! I shall know how to prevent him. My just anger

ERAS. (*aside*). I can see somebody before Orphise's door; she encourages my love, but fresh obstacles seem for ever to be placed in my way.

DAM. (*to L'EPINE*). Yes, I have been informed that my niece, notwithstanding all my care, means to have a private interview with Eraste this evening.

LA RIV. (*to his companions*). What are those people saying about our master? Let us approach gently, without showing ourselves.

DAM. (*to L'EPINE*). But before he can put his project into execution, a thousand wounds shall pierce his treacherous heart. Go and fetch those men I told you of, and place them in ambush where I desired; and at the mention of the name of Eraste, let them be ready to avenge my honour he has the insolence to sully. We will prevent the appointment which calls him here from taking place, and will quench his criminal passion in his blood.

(*Exit L'EPINE.*)

LA RIV. (*attacking DAMIS with his companions*). Wretch! before you sacrifice him to your fury, you will find you have something to say to us.

ERAS. (*drawing his sword*). Although he meant to destroy me, yet honour calls upon me to succour the uncle of her I love. (*to DAMIS*) I am on your side, sir (*draws his sword against LA RIVIÈRE and his companions, and drives them off*).

DAM. O Heaven! by what hand am I saved from a certain death? To whom am I indebted for such timely help?

ERAS. (*coming back*). In saving you I have only done an act of justice.

DAM. Can I trust my ears, do I owe to the hand of Eraste?

ERAS. Yes, it is I; too happy that my arm has saved you; too unhappy that I have deserved your hatred.

DAM. What! Is it he, whose death I had resolved upon, that has employed his weapon for me? Ah! this is too much, my heart is forced to yield, and whatever may have been your intentions to-night, your generosity stifles all resentment in me. I blush for my fault, and blame my caprice. My hatred has too long injured you, and, to condemn it more surely, I will unite you this very night to Orphise.

SCENE VI.—ORPHISE, DAMIS, ERASTE.

ORPH. (*coming out of the house with a light*). Sir, what terrible accident has frightened . . .

DAM. Nothing terrible, my niece, since this accident gives you Eraste for a husband. He has saved me from imminent peril, and I wish to recompense him with the gift of your hand, for I have blamed too long your love for him.

ERAS. I am so overcome by this strange event, that I doubt whether I am asleep or awake.

DAM. Let us celebrate your happy future; call the violins, and let their music gladden us. (*Some one knocks.*)

ERAS. Who knocks so loudly?

SCENE VII.—DAMIS, ORPHISE, ERASTE, L'EPINE.

L'EP. Masqueraders, sir, who with screeching fiddles* and tambourines . . .

ERAS. What! bores again! Here, guards, let the villains be turned out.

BALLET TO THE THIRD ACT.

First Entry.

Guards with halberds drive out all the tiresome masqueraders, and retire to give place to

Second Entry.

Four shepherds; also a shepherdess, who in the opinion of the spectators concludes the entertainment with much grace.

* *Crincrins* may mean rattles. See Despois, vol. iii. p. 96.

THE SCHOOL FOR WIVES.

(L'ÉCOLE DES FEMMES.)

'L'ÉCOLE DES FEMMES' was played for the first time at the Théâtre du Palais Royal, on the 26th of December, 1662.

Molière played the part of Arnolphe.

Arnolphe is of the Sganarelle type, selfish, censorious, rejoicing in what brings scandal upon others.

This was one of the most successful of Molière's plays, but it raised against him a host of enemies, to whom he answered first in the 'Critique de l'École des Femmes,' and then in the 'Impromptu de Versailles.'

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

ARNOLPHE, *also called Mr. DE LA SOUCHE.*

CHRYSSALDE, *friend to ARNOLPHE.*

ENRIQUE, *brother-in-law to CHRYSSALDE.*

HORACE, *lover to AGNES.*

ORONTE, *father to HORACE and friend to ARNOLPHE.*

ALAIN, *a countryman, servant to ARNOLPHE.*

A NOTARY.

AGNES, *an artless young girl, brought up by ARNOLPHE.*

GEORGETTE, *a countrywoman, servant to ARNOLPHE.*

The scene is in an open place in a town.

THE SCHOOL FOR WIVES.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—CHRYSALE, ARNOLPHE.

CHRYS. You have come, you say, to marry her?

ARN. Yes, and I mean to conclude the affair to-morrow.

CHRYS. We are alone here, and I think we can safely talk together without fear of being overheard. Shall I, as a friend, tell you openly what I think? Your determination makes me tremble with fear, because which ever way you consider the matter, it is a very rash step for you to take a wife.

ARN. Yes, my friend. You no doubt find at home reason to make you tremble for me, and I suspect that your forehead judges horns to be ever the appendage of a married life.

CHRYS. From such accidents no one is secure, and I think it very foolish to trouble oneself too much about it. But when I fear for you, it is because of your pitiless derision, the sting of which has been felt by so many a poor husband. For you know that neither great nor small have been safe from your criticisms, and that you delight, wherever you go, in spreading scandalous reports of secret intrigues

ARN. Well, well! But tell me now, is there another place in the world where husbands are as forbearing as they are here? Are they not, most of them, treated at home in the most shameful manner? We find one heaping up wealth which his wife squanders among those bent upon deceiving him. Another, a little more fortunate, but not less infamous, sees his wife receive presents every

day, and yet never evinces the slightest symptom of jealousy, because she tells him that they are the reward of virtue. Another husband makes much noise to very little purpose. His neighbour suffers things to go on in all meekness, and when the lover comes to his house, humbly takes his gloves and cloak, and goes his way. One wife—the cunning woman—pretends to take for confidant her faithful spouse, who, lulled to sleep by such blandishments, pities the poor lover for the pains he takes, as he thinks, in vain. Another, to explain her extravagance, says, that she wins at play all the money she spends, and the poor foolish husband, without considering at what play, thanks Heaven for her good luck. In short, you see subjects for satire wherever you go. May I not, while looking on, laugh? May I not do with these fools . . . ?

CHRY. Yes; but he who laughs at others should fear lest he be laughed at in turn. I hear the world talk, and see how some people amuse themselves by repeating all that goes on; but whatever may be divulged before me, nobody can reproach me with exulting over it. I am reserved enough in these matters; and although I ever feel inclined to condemn the abuse of forbearance, and have no intention whatever to submit quietly to what some husbands endure, yet I have taken great care never to say so; for after all, the satire may recoil upon ourselves, and we should never boast beforehand of what we should or should not do in like circumstance. Thus, if an overruling fate had decreed that my honour should suffer disgrace, I am almost sure, considering my behaviour in such matters, that people would be satisfied with laughing at it in secret. Perhaps even I might have the good fortune to see some kind folks pity me. But with you, my dear fellow, it is quite another thing, and I repeat it, you run a devilish risk; for as your tongue has always been very bitter against patient, ill-used husbands, and as you have been like a very demon let loose upon them, mind you do not stumble, if you would avoid being the laughing-stock of everybody. If people should get the least hold upon you, beware, lest your disgrace be proclaimed on the house-tops.

ARN. Pray now, my dear friend, do not distress yourself on my account. He will be a clever man who catches

me in this matter. I am up to all the cunning tricks and ingenious devices which women employ to deceive us. As I know that we are always duped through their dexterity, I have taken my precautions against misbaps, and she who is to be my wife has all the ignorant simplicity needed to save my forehead from evil influence.

CHRY. And what! do you imagine that a simple girl—a fool in fact

ARN. I marry a fool not to be made a fool of. I believe, like a charitable Christian, in the virtue of your better half; but to my mind, a clever wife forebodes no good, and I know how dearly some people pay for their wives' talents. What! shall I saddle myself with a clever intellectual wife, who talks of nothing but of society and *ruelles*; * who writes tender things in prose and in verse, and is visited by marquises and by wits, whilst I, as the husband of madam, must be like a saint whom no one invokes. No, no, such wonderful genius is not for me, and to my mind a woman who writes knows more than she ought. I intend that my wife shall not even be able to understand what is meant by a rhyme; and that if she were playing at *crambo*, and were asked "what rhyme will you give to *basket*," her answer might be "a cream tart."† In a word, I want her to be extremely ignorant, and, to tell you the plain truth, I shall be satisfied if she can sew, spin, say her prayers, and love me.

CHRY. You wish, then, for a stupid wife?

ARN. So much so, that I would rather marry an ugly fool than a handsome genius.

CHRY. Genius and beauty

ARN. Virtue is sufficient.

CHRY. But how can you expect that a mere simpleton will ever understand what it is to be virtuous? I should

* See 'Les Précieuses ridicules,' Scene x. p. 165.

† This seems to be the only way of making any sense of this difficult little piece. *Crambo* and *corbillon* are practically the same game, but *corbillon* also means a small basket in which cakes, &c., are put. Such a basket may have been used in the game. Agnes' confusion of mind between *corbillon* the basket, and *corbillon* the game, &c., disappears in the English rendering, but her inability of rhyming remains, and that is the chief point.

think it sufficiently wearisome in itself for a man to be tied to a fool all his lifetime; but do you really believe that your scheme is the right one to save you from all dishonour? If a sensible woman acts contrary to her duty, she must, at least, do so consciously and wilfully: whereas the simpleton may easily fail in hers, without desiring or thinking of so doing.

ARN. To this convincing argument, to this profound discourse, I return the answer of Pantagruel to Panurge: * urge me to marry any woman but a stupid one, preach and advocate from now to Whitsuntide; you will be astonished, when you are at the end, to find that you have not in the least convinced me.

CHRY. I will say no more.

ARN. Everyone has his own plan; in marrying, as in aught else, I am determined to do as I like. I am rich enough, I think, to choose a partner who owes everything to me, and who in her low station, and complete dependence, can never taunt me with her wealth or noble birth. A gentle, quiet look made me distinguish her from other children when she was but four years old, and made me love her. Her mother being very poor, it came into my head to adopt the child as my own, and the good country-woman, on learning my wish, was only too thankful to give up her charge. In a little convent out of reach of all evil influences, I had her brought up according to my own notions; that is, I laid down the means to be employed to make her as much of an idiot as possible. I am thankful to say, that I succeeded beyond all my expectations, and that when she grew up, I found her innocent to such a degree, that I thanked Heaven for having found me a wife according to my heart's desire. I took her away, and as my house is ever accessible to all kinds of people, I sent her—for it is always as well to provide against accidents—to another house where nobody ever comes to see me. There also, in order not to spoil her natural disposition, I keep people about her as simple as herself. But you will say, "Why this long story?" I

* Pantagruel and Panurge, two characters in 'Pantagruel,' by Rabelais. See Book iii. ch. v.

want you to know what care I have taken, and I will end all this, by asking you as a trusty friend to come to supper with us to-night; I wish you to examine her a little, and see if I am to be blamed for my choice.

CHRY. I accept with pleasure.

ARN. You will be able, whilst talking with her. to judge of her person and her innocence.

CHRY. As to that, what you have told me of her cannot

ARN. Even what I have told you falls short of the truth. She constantly takes me by surprise, and sometimes she says things that are enough to make me die with laughter. The other day (would you ever believe it?) she came in great perplexity, and with exquisite innocence, to ask me if children came by the ear.

CHRY. I am very glad, Arnolphe

ARN. Again! Will you always call me by that name?

CHRY. It comes to me so naturally, and I can never remember Mr. de la Souche. What the deuce has put it into your head at forty-two years old to change your name and to give yourself a title from an old rotten trunk on your farm?

ARN. Not only is the house known by that name, but de la Souche pleases my ear better than Arnolphe.

CHRY. What folly to lay aside the name of one's ancestors, and to take one based upon a whim! Yet it is the fashion with most people nowadays. I know a country fellow named Gros-Pierre with an estate consisting of but a rood of land, who had a muddy ditch dug all round it, and who took the pompous name of M. de l'Isle. Not that I would for one moment wish to include you in the comparison.

ARN. You might well dispense with such examples. But anyhow, de la Souche is the name I bear; I have a reason for it, I find pleasure in it, and to call me otherwise is to disoblige me.

CHRY. But most people find it hard to accustom themselves to it, and I even now see letters addressed

ARN. I can bear with it from those who do not know; but you

CHRY. Oh! very well, we will not fall out about it,

and I will take care to accustom my lips to call you nothing but Mr. de la Souche.

ARN. Good-bye, I shall call here to say good morning, and just to let them know that I have returned.

CHRYs. (*aside*). Upon my word, he is wrong in the head. (*Exit.*)

ARN. He is a little cracked in certain things; it is wonderful to see how every man is wedded to his own opinion. (*knocks at his door*) Hallo inside!

SCENE II.—ARNOLPHE, ALAIN, GEORGETTE (*inside the house*).

AL. Who knocks?

ARN. Open the door. (*aside*) How glad they will be to see me after ten days' absence!

AL. Who is there?

ARN. It is I.

AL. Georgette!

GEOR. Well?

AL. Open the door.

GEOR. Do it yourself.

AL. You go and do it.

GEOR. I shan't go.

AL. I shan't go either.

ARN. A pleasing ceremony, but one which leaves me outside. (*knocks again*) Hallo, hallo, here, I say!

GEOR. Who's that knocking?

ARN. Your master.

GEOR. Alain!

AL. What?

GEOR. It's the master; open quickly.

AL. You open.

GEOR. I'm blowing the fire.

AL. I'm shutting my sparrow's cage for fear of the cat.

ARN. The one who does not open the door shall have nothing to eat for four days. Do you hear?

GEOR. What is the good of your coming when I am running to do it?

AL. Why should you rather than I? A fine thing indeed!

GEOR. Get out of the way, will you?

AL. You get out yourself!

GEOR. I will open the door!

AL. And so will I.

GEOR. You shan't open it!

AL. No more shall you!

GEOR. Nor you.

ARN. Well, one stands in need of patience here!

AL. (*coming out*). It was I opened the door, master.

GEOR. (*coming out*). No, master, it was I.

AL. If it wasn't for the respect we owe our master, I would (*tries to hit GEORGETTE and hits ARNOLPHE instead*).

ARN. Plague take you

AL. I beg your pardon, master.

ARN. You clumsy fellow!

AL. It was her fault, master.

ARN. Hold your tongue, both of you. Let us have no more fooling, and answer me. Alain, how are you all?

AL. Why, master, we (*ARNOLPHE takes off ALAIN's hat*) Master, we (*ARNOLPHE takes it off again*). Thank Heaven, we (*ARNOLPHE takes off the hat for the third time, and throws it on the ground*).

ARN. You impertinent animal, take off your hat when you speak to me.

AL. You are right, master, I ought to have known better.

ARN. (*to ALAIN*). Ask Agnes to come down.

(*Exit ALAIN.*)

SCENE III.—ARNOLPHE, GEORGETTE.

ARN. Was she sad after I went away?

GEOR. Sad? No.

ARN. No?

GEOR. Yes, yes.

ARN. Why?

GEOR. Yes, I'm blest if she didn't think every minute you were coming back. And we never heard a horse, ass, or mule pass our door, but she thought it was you.

SCENE IV.—ARNOLPHE, AGNES, ALAIN, GEORGETTE.

ARN. Work in hand! that's a good sign. Well, Agnes, I have returned; are you glad of it?

AGN. Yes, sir, Heaven be thanked.

ARN. I too am glad to see you again, it is easy to see that you have been well all the time!

AGN. Yes, sir, except for the fleas, which disturbed me at night.

ARN. Oh! you will soon have somebody to drive them away.

AGN. I shall be very glad.

ARN. I can easily imagine it. What are you working at?

AGN. I am making myself some night-caps. Your night-shirts and caps are finished.

ARN. Ah! that's all right. Now go up again. Don't mope, I shall soon return to speak to you on an important matter.
(*Exit AGNES.*)

SCENE V.—ARNOLPHE.

You heroines of the day, you learned ladies, who utter tender speeches, and fine sentiments—I defy all your verses, novels, letters, billets-doux, and all your knowledge to be worth as much as this virtuous and modest ignorance. It is not by wealth we should be dazzled; and so long as virtue is

SCENE VI.—HORACE, ARNOLPHE.

ARN. What do I see? can it be No I am mistaken. But no, I am not, it is he himself. Hor

HOR. Arn

ARN. Horace!

HOR. Arnolphe!

ARN. Ah! This is pleasure indeed! and how long have you been here?

HOR. Nine days.

ARN. Really?

HOR. I went straight to your house, but you were not there.

ARN. I have been in the country.

HOR. For the last ten days, I was told.

ARN. How these children spring up in a few years! It is strange for me to see him so tall when I knew him no bigger than that.

HOR. So it always is.

ARN. But, pray, how is Oronte your father, my dear excellent friend, whom I so esteem and respect? What is he doing? Is he hearty still? He knows that I take the greatest interest in all that concerns him. We have not seen one another however for these four years; nor, what is more, have we written to each other, I think.

HOR. He is even more hearty than you and I. I have a letter to give you from him; but he has written again to say, that he's coming himself; without telling me, however, what brings him here. Do you know who can be that townsman of yours who is returning with an immense fortune which he has acquired in America during the last fourteen years?

ARN. No. Have you heard his name?

HOR. Enrique.

ARN. No.

HOR. My father speaks of him in his letter, and tells me of his return, as if I ought to know him well. He writes that they are coming together on an affair of importance; but his letter does not mention what the affair is.

(Gives ORONTE's letter to ARNOLPHE.)

ARN. I shall certainly be very happy to see him, and will do my best to receive him well. *(after reading the letter)* Friends should not stand upon so much ceremony, and all these compliments are unnecessary. You can dispose of all I have, even though he had not written about it.

HOR. Take care, for I am a man to take people at their word, and I stand, for the present, in need of a hundred pistoles.

ARN. Upon my word, you oblige me by dealing thus frankly with me, and I am glad I have them here. Keep the purse also.

HOR. I must

ARN. No, no, do not trouble yourself about that. Well, and how do you like this city of ours?

HOR. There seem to be plenty of people, plenty of superb buildings, and I should think no lack of exciting pleasures.

ARN. You are right, every man can find pleasures to suit his own taste; but as for those whom we christen gallants, they have here all they can desire, for the women are all born coquettes. Whether dark or fair, they are all alike amiably disposed; and nothing can exceed the good-nature and simplicity of the husbands. It is a pleasure fit for a prince, and the pranks I see every day are as good to me as a comedy. Have you not already had some adventure? A handsome figure like yours is better than money, and you are just the man to trouble the peace of the husbands,

HOR. To tell you the truth, I have already had a certain love adventure, and friendship compels me to tell you all about it.

ARN. (*aside*). There! just as I thought, another fine story to jot down in my pocket-book.

HOR. But promise me to keep the thing secret.

ARN. Oh!

HOR. You know that in these matters a secret divulged may frustrate all our hopes. I will tell you frankly that I have fallen in love with a certain beauty here. From the first, my little attentions were so successful, that I was soon kindly received into her house; and without wishing to boast too much, or speak too lightly of her, I must say that affairs are going very well with me.

ARN. (*laughing*). And who is she?

HOR. (*pointing to the house of AGNES*). A young girl who lives in yonder house with red walls. She is very innocent, I must confess, owing to the matchless folly of a man who lures her from all the world. But in spite of the ignorance by which he tries to enslave her, she possesses charms that throw one into raptures, and she has a most engaging manner, which is sufficient to enslave anyone. But you must have seen this dazzling young beauty, endowed with so many attractions; her name is Agnes.

ARN. (*aside*). Ah!

HOR. As for the man, I think he is called de la Zousse

or Source; I did not trouble much about the name. He is said to be rich, but is certainly not over wise. He was spoken of to me as a character. Do you not know him?

ARN. (*aside*). A bitter pill to swallow!

HOR. Why, you do not answer.

ARN. Yes, yes, I know him.

HOR. He is a fool, is he not?

ARN. Eh!

HOR. What do you mean by "eh?" Yes, there's no doubt he is a fool, and absurdly jealous! I see, he is just as I was told. In short, the lovely Agnes has captivated me; she is a pretty jewel, and I can assure you it would be a shame to leave such a rare gem in the power of this odd old fellow. As for me, all my endeavours, all my dearest wishes are to make her mine in spite of this jealous guardian; and if I have borrowed money so freely from you, it is to bring to an end this pleasant intrigue. You know better than I do, that whatever we may undertake, gold is the key which opens all locks, and that this sweet metal which turns so many heads, promotes our conquests, both in love and in war. You seem distressed! Can you possibly disapprove of the project I have formed?

ARN. No. I was only thinking

HOR. My conversation wearies you, I see. Good-bye, I shall soon call at your house to thank you. (*Goes.*)

ARN. (*alone*). Ah! must it. . . .

HOR. (*coming back*). Once more I beg of you to be cautious; do not let my secret out.

ARN. (*alone*). How I feel in my inmost soul

HOR. (*coming back again*). Particularly to my father, whom it might displease. (*Exit.*)

SCENE VII.—ARNOLPHE (*alone*).

Oh! what have I not suffered during this conversation! Never did a man feel anxiety like mine! But with what imprudence and senseless haste did he come and tell me the whole story! Even though he is kept in error by my second name, did ever any hare-brained blunderer run on so wildly? Yet, since I had endured so much, why did I not conquer myself till I had ascertained what I have such

reasons to fear? Why did I not encourage his indiscreet babbling, and discover all the particulars of their secret understanding. I will try to overtake him; I am afraid he is not very far off. If I can, I will yet draw out his entire confidence. But we often seek to know more than we wish to find true, and I tremble at the sorrow it can bring me.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—ARNOLPHE (*alone*).

Perhaps, now I think of it, it is just as well for me to have lost my time and missed him, for, I am afraid, that I could not have hid entirely from him the terrible anxiety that is killing me; my grief would have broken forth; and I would fain conceal from him what he is at present ignorant of. But I am not the man to be led by the nose and leave the coast clear to the ardour of a young fop; I shall know how to stop him in the middle of his career. To begin with, I must find out at once how far they understand each other. My honour is deeply concerned in all this, for I look upon her already as my wife. She cannot have done wrong without covering me with shame, and all she does will be put to my account. Fatal absence! unfortunate journey! (*Knocks at the door.*)

SCENE II.—ARNOLPHE, ALAIN, GEORGETTE.

AL. Ah! Master, this time

ARN. That's enough. Come here, both of you. This way; no, that way. Come along, come along. I tell you.

GEOR. Ah! You frighten me, all my blood runs cold.

ARN. Is this how you have obeyed me in my absence? Had you then both agreed to deceive me?

GEOR. (*falling on her knees before ARNOLPHE*). O master! don't eat me, pray don't.

AL. (*aside*). Some mad dog has bitten him, surely!

ARN. (*aside*). I can't speak; I am so put out, I am choking, and should like to ease me of my clothes. (*to ALAIN and GEORGETTE*) You cursed scoundrels, you have

allowed a man to come in here (to ALAIN, who tries to escape) What, you want to run away? You must this instant (to GEORGETTE) If you stir . . . ! I will have you tell me ! yes, I will have you both (ALAIN and GEORGETTE both try to escape.) S'dearth! I'll knock down the first who moves. How is it that this man got into my house? Eh? Speak. Make haste. Quick. Directly. At once. This instant, without hesitating. Will you speak, or will you not?

AL. and GEOR. Ah, ah!

GEOR. (*kneeling down before him*). My heart fails me.

AL. (*kneeling down before him*). I am dying.

ARN. (*aside*). I am sweating at every pore; I must take breath; I must walk and cool myself. Could I have imagined, when I saw him a little boy, that he would grow up for this! Good Heavens! how I suffer! I think it will be better to have the whole story from Agnes; I must moderate my anger, and speak kindly to her. Patience, my heart; gently, gently. (to ALAIN and GEORGETTE) Get up, and go and tell Agnes to come down to me. Stay. (*aside*) She would not be taken so much by surprise, for they would tell her of my displeasure; it is better I should go myself. (to ALAIN and GEORGETTE) Wait for me here. (*Exit.*)

SCENE III.—ALAIN, GEORGETTE.

GEOR. Lor, how terrible he is! His looks frightened me, frightened me horribly; and I never saw a more ugly-looking Christian.

AL. That gentleman has made him angry; I told you how it would be.

GEOR. But why does he make us keep our mistress so closely shut up at home? Why will he hide her from everybody, and why can't he bear to see any one come near her?

AL. It is because he feels jealous.

GEOR. But how comes that fancy into his head?

AL. It comes because . . . it comes because . . . he is jealous.

GEOR. Yes; but why is he jealous? and why all this anger?

AL. It is because jealousy.... understand me well, Georgette, jealousy is a thing.... which.... which makes one uneasy.... and which drives people away from all round about one's house. To make you understand more clearly, I will draw you a comparison. Tell me, now, if, when you have your soup ready, some hungry fellow were to come and eat it up, wouldn't you be angry, and go at him?

GEOR. Yes, I understand that.

AL. It is just the same thing, a wife is in fact man's soup; and when one man sees other men who would like to dip their fingers in, it makes him at once dreadfully angry.

GEOR. Yes, I see. But how is it that all men are not the same, and that we see some look quite happy, when their wives are in the company of fine gentlemen?

AL. It is, because everybody has not that gluttonous love that would keep all for himself.

GEOR. If my eyes don't cheat me, I see him coming.

AL. Your eyes are good; it's the master.

GEOR. Just see how sad he looks.

AL. It is because he is vexed.

SCENE IV.—ARNOLPHE, ALAIN, GEORGETTE.

ARN. (*aside*). A certain Greek gave this wise and useful maxim to the Emperor Augustus; that whenever anything makes us angry, we should first of all repeat the whole of the alphabet, so that our anger may abate in the meantime, and we may not be carried away to do what we ought not to do. I have followed this advice on this occasion with Agnes. I have brought her out here under pretence of taking a walk with me; I will artfully lead the conversation, and my sick mind, in sounding her heart, will gently draw out the truth of the matter.

SCENE V.—ARNOLPHE, AGNES, ALAIN, GEORGETTE.

ARN. Come, Agnes. (*to ALAIN and GEORGETTE*) Go in.
(*Rise!* ALAIN and GEORGETTE.)

SCENE VI.—ARNOLPHE, AGNES.

ARN. It is very pleasant walking.

AGN. Very pleasant.

ARN. What a fine day!

AGN. Very fine.

ARN. Well, and what news?

AGN. The kitten is dead.

ARN. It's a pity; but we are all mortal, and every one must think of himself. Has it rained here during my absence in the country?

AGN. No.

ARN. Did you feel dull?

AGN. I never feel dull.

ARN. What have you done during these nine or ten days?

AGN. Six night-shirts, I think, and six night-caps too.

ARN. (*after thinking a little*). This world is a strange place, dear Agnes. You would never think what slanders one hears. Will you believe that some neighbours have told me that a young man, a stranger, came to my house in my absence, and that you allowed him to see you and to talk to you. I would not believe those mischievous tongues, and I proposed to lay a wager that they falsely

AGN. Goodness gracious! don't do anything of the kind, for you are sure to lose.

ARN. What! Is it true that a man

AGN. Perfectly true, and I assure you that he scarcely stirred out of the house.

ARN. (*aside*). This confession made so candidly, at least shows me all her innocence. (*aloud*) But it seems to me, Agnes, if I remember right, that I had forbidden you to see anybody.

AGN. Yes, but you don't know why I saw him, and you would, no doubt, have done what I did.

ARN. Perhaps; but just tell me how it all happened.

AGN. It is a wonderful story, and difficult to believe. I was on the balcony, working in the open air, when I saw a handsome young man pass under the trees close to me. Seeing me look at him, he at once bowed to me very respectfully. I, not to fail in civility, saluted him in return.

Presently he made another bow, and I readily returned it. He quickly answered with a third, and I immediately did the same. He went up and down, and every time he passed made me a profound bow. I kept looking intently at him, and never missed returning a single one, so that if the night had not interrupted us, I should have gone on in the same way, for I was unwilling to give over, or to have the vexation of thinking that he could consider me less polite than himself.

ARN. Very well; go on.

AGN. The next day, as I was standing at the door, an old woman came to me, and spoke to me after this fashion: "My child, may Heaven bless you, and keep you long in all the brightness of your beauty! It did not make you so lovely, for you to make a bad use of its gifts; you must know that you have wounded a heart which is now forced to complain."

ARN. (*aside*). Ah! agent of the devil! cursed jade!

AGN. "I! Have I wounded anybody?" I exclaimed, in astonishment. "Yes; wounded," she said, "wounded deeply, and it is the young man you saw yesterday from your balcony." "Alas!" cried I, "what can have done it? Did I carelessly let anything fall on him?" "No," she replied; "your eyes gave the fatal blow, and all his suffering comes from their glances." "How you surprise me!" I said; "have my eyes any evil they can communicate to others?" "Yes, daughter," she answered; "your eyes have a deadly poison in them, which you are ignorant of: in a word, the poor fellow is pining away, and if," continued the charitable old woman, "you are cruel enough to refuse him your assistance, he will be carried to his grave in a couple of days." "O Heaven!" I cried, "I should be deeply grieved for that; but what can I do for him?" "My child, all he asks of you is the happiness of seeing you, and of being allowed to speak to you; your eyes alone are able to prevent his ruin, and they only can cure the disease they have caused." I answered, "Alas! with all my heart; since it is so, he can come as often as he likes to see me."

ARN. (*aside*). O cursed witch, poisoner of souls! May hell reward thee for thy charitable plots!

AGN. This is how he came to see me, and was cured.

Now tell me, was I not right? And could I, after all, be so cruel as to suffer him to die for want of what I could do to save him? I, who feel such pity for all who suffer, and cannot, without weeping, see the death of a poor chicken!

ARN. (*aside*). All this was caused by her innocence. I have only to blame my imprudent absence for it; I should not have left the kind-hearted girl alone, without guide, exposed to the wiles of cunning deceivers. I am greatly afraid that the wretch, in his wild vows, may have carried the matter somewhat beyond a jest.

AGN. What is the matter with you? You seem rather vexed. Do you think I have done wrong in what I have told you?

ARN. No; but tell me what followed. How did the young man behave during his visit?

AGN. Ah! if you knew how overjoyed he was; how his illness left him the moment he saw me; the present he made me of a pretty casket, and the money our Alain and Georgette got from him, you would certainly love him, and say, as we do. . . .

ARN. Yes; but what did he do when he was alone with you?

AGN. He said he loved me as nobody had ever loved before; he used the prettiest speeches in the world, to which nothing can ever be compared; and each time I heard him say them, my soul was in raptures, and I felt there in my heart a something or other, which was very delightful.

ARN. (*aside*). Oh! painful inquiry into a fatal secret, where the inquirer alone suffers all the pain! (*to AGNES*) Besides all this talk, and all these pretty compliments, did he not kiss you a little?

AGN. Oh so much! he took my hands and arms, and was never tired of kissing them.

ARN. Did he take nothing else from you, Agnes? (*seeing her hesitate*) Ha!

AGN. Yes, he he

ARN. What?

AGN. He took. . . .

ARN. He took?

AGN. The

ARN. The what?

AGN. I dare not tell you, you will perhaps be angry with me.

ARN. No.

AGN. I know you will.

ARN. I assure you I shall not.

AGN. Pledge your word.

ARN. Very well. On my word then.

AGN. He took my You will be in a passion.

ARN. No.

AGN. Yes.

ARN. No, no; no, no. Dear me, what is the meaning of all this mystery! What did he take from you?

AGN. He

ARN. (*aside*). I suffer the tortures of the damned.

AGN. He took from me the ribbon you gave me. But I really could not help it.

ARN. (*drawing his breath*). Never mind about the ribbon; but I want to know whether he did nothing but kiss your arms?

AGN. Why, do people do anything else?

ARN. No, no. But he asked for no other remedy from you to cure the malady from which he says he suffers?

AGN. No. You may imagine that if he had, I should have granted him at once everything to do him good.

ARN. (*aside*). Thank Heaven I have come off cheaply enough; if I ever fall into the like mistake again, may I suffer all the consequences. (*aloud*) This all comes of your innocence, Agnes, and I do not scold you for it. What is done can't be undone. Only know that by his flattery the young dandy only wanted to deceive you, and afterwards to laugh at you.

AGN. Oh, no, he would not; he told me so himself more than twenty times.

ARN. Ah, you do not know how little he is to be trusted. But, however, you must learn that to accept caskets, and listen to the idle talk of these fine coxcombs, to suffer them to kiss your hand after their languishing fashion, and flatter your heart, is a mortal sin,—one of the greatest you can commit.

AGN. A sin, do you say? Why is it a sin?

ARN. Why it is a sin? The reason is that we know that Heaven is offended by such actions.

AGN. Offended? But why should it be offended? It is so pleasant and so sweet! I am so transported at the pleasure it gives, and I had no idea as yet of all these things.

ARN. Yes, there is a deal of pleasure to draw from all this tenderness, those pretty soft speeches and those fond caresses, but you must do it in an honest manner; and by marrying the sin is taken away.

AGN. Is it no longer a sin after marriage?

ARN. No.

AGN. Marry me then, at once, I beg of you.

ARN. If it is your wish, it is mine too, and I have come back to marry you.

AGN. Is it possible?

ARN. Yes.

AGN. How happy you will make me!

ARN. Yes, I have no doubt but that marriage will please you.

AGN. You wish us both . . .

ARN. Nothing is more certain.

AGN. How, I will embrace you!

ARN. I will do the same to you.

AGN. I never know when people are laughing at me. Do please tell me if you are jesting, or if you are speaking seriously.

ARN. You will see that I am quite serious.

AGN. We shall be married?

ARN. Yes.

AGN. But when?

ARN. This very evening.

AGN. (*laughing*). This very evening?

ARN. This very evening. You are glad, then?

AGN. Yes.

ARN. All I care for, is to see you happy.

AGN. Ah! how thankful I am to you, and how happy I shall be with him!

ARN. With whom?

AGN. With you know with

ARN. With you know with What do you mean? You are rather quick in choosing a husband for yourself. I am speaking to you of another whom I have ready for you. As to that gentleman, listen to me. Were the pain he suffers to lead him to the grave, I wish you in future to break off all intercourse with him. If he comes here I wish you to greet him by shutting the door in his face, and if he knocks, by throwing some heavy stone at his head. So you must force him never to appear again. Do you hear me, Agnes? I shall be hid in some corner, and see how you behave.

AGN. Alas! he is so handsome! It is

ARN. Leave off all this nonsense!

AGN. I shall never have the heart. . . .

ARN. No more discussion; go to your room immediately.

AGN. But really, do you want me. . . .?

ARN. That's enough, I tell you. I am master here, and I command you. I have told you what to do, you must obey.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—ARNOLPHE, AGNES, ALAIN, GEORGETTE.

ARN. Yes, you did very well, and I am very pleased; you carefully followed my orders to the letter, and brought that young seducer to utter confusion and shame. You see how necessary it is to have a wise adviser. Fancy, Agnes, what risk you ran. He profited by your innocence, and you were on the high road to hell and perdition. I know the way of these young libertines; they have fine canions; * ribbons and plumes in abundance; large wigs, fine teeth and a smooth tongue, but, as I told you, the cloven foot is hidden beneath, and they are real devils, whose corrupt appetite tries to prey upon the honour of women. But now, thanks to my care, you have escaped with your virtue from the snare. The manner in which you threw that stone, which destroyed all his hopes, confirms me in

* See 'The School for Husbands,' Act i. Scene i. p. 250.

my intention not to delay the marriage for which I told you to prepare. But, first of all, it is most important that I should have a serious talk with you. (*to ALAIN and GEORGETTE*) A seat here in this cool place; but you, if ever anything. . . .

GEOR. We remember well all your instructions. That gentleman imposed on us, but if he

AL. If he comes in again, I swear never to drink any more. Besides, he is a fool, for the two gold pieces he gave us the other day were under weight.

ARN. Prepare everything I told you for supper; and go, one of you, to fetch the notary who lives near the market-place. He must draw up the contract.

(*Exeunt ALAIN and GEORGETTE.*)

SCENE II.—ARNOLPHE, AGNES.

ARN. (*seated*). Agnes, leave off working, and listen to me; hold up your head a little and turn your face this way. There (*putting his finger to his forehead*), look at me well while I speak to you, and try to remember every word I say. I am going to take you for my wife, Agnes, and every hour of the day you ought to contemplate the humble position from which I took you, to bless your destiny, and to admire my goodness. From the low station of a poor country girl I raise you to the honourable rank of a citizen's wife, to enjoy the companionship and embraces of a man who has always avoided all such engagements, and whose heart has refused the honour he means to do you, to twenty women with many great attractions. You should always, I say, remember how insignificant you would be but for this glorious alliance, so that you may the better strive to deserve the position in which I shall place you, and always to realize what you are. Thus, I can ever rejoice over the step I now take. Marriage, Agnes, is no light matter; many serious duties are required from a wife, and you must not imagine that I raise you to the state of matrimony in order that you may be free and take your ease. It is intended that your sex should be dependent. All power is on the side of the beard. Although we constitute the two

halves of society, these two halves are in no way equal; one is the supreme half, and the other the subordinate; one is in all cases subject, the other always governs. That obedience which the well-disciplined soldier shows to his leader, the servant to his master, the child to his father, or the lowest monk to his superior, is not to be compared with the docility, obedience, humility, and profound respect which a wife should have for her husband, her chief, her lord and master. When he looks at her seriously, her duty is to lower her eyes at once, and not to presume to look him in the face till he deigns to favour her with a gracious smile. This is what women understand so badly nowadays. But do not suffer the example of others to corrupt you. Beware of imitating those contemptible flirts, whose actions are the talk of the whole town; do not be overcome by the assaults of the evil spirit—I mean do not hearken to any young libertine. Consider, Agnes, that in making you part of myself, it is my honour I entrust to you; that this honour is tender and easily damaged; that it is not a thing to be sported with, and that there are in hell, boiling caldrons into which wives who lead bad lives are thrown for ever.* What I tell you is no nonsense, and you ought to lay these lessons to heart. If you follow them, and avoid being a coquette, your soul will always be as white and spotless as a lily; but if you forfeit your honour it will become as black as coal. You will then seem a frightful object to everybody, and in time will become a prey to the devil and will boil in hell to all eternity; from which may Heaven in its goodness preserve you! Make a curtsy, Agnes. As a novice in a convent ought to know her duties by heart, so it should be in entering the married life; and I have here in my pocket an important document which will teach you the duty of a wife. I do not know who is the author, but it must be some good man or other; and I want you to make it your only study. (*rises*) Take it. Let me see if you can read it easily.

(*AGNES reads.*)

* Molière was accused of turning religion into ridicule in these lines. See his answer in 'La Critique de L'Ecole des Femmes,' Scene vii. p. 391.

"The Maxims of Marriage, or the Duties of a Wife; with her Daily Exercises."

MAXIM I.

"She who enters into the honourable state of matrimony, ought to remember, in spite of all we see nowadays, that the man who marries her, marries her for himself alone."

ARN. I will explain to you another day what that means; for the present it is sufficient for you to read it.
(AGNES goes on.)

MAXIM II.

"She ought not to dress herself out more than her husband desires. The care of her beauty concerns him alone, and it should be of no consequence to her if others think her plain."

MAXIM III.

"Let her shun all soft glances, and all washes, paint, pomades, and the thousand and one ingredients which beautify the face; these are mortal enemies to honour, and a wife seldom takes pains to appear beautiful for the sake of her husband."

MAXIM IV.

"When she goes out, she must, as virtue requires, conceal her face in her hood, and prevent the wounds her eyes might give; for in order to please her husband well, she should please no one else."

MAXIM V.

"Honour forbids her to receive any visits but those that are paid to her husband. Gallants who only come to pay visits to the wife are not at all welcome to the husband."

MAXIM VI.

"She must be very careful never to accept presents from

men; for in the age in which we live, nothing is given for nothing."

MAXIM VII.

"Amongst her furniture, even if she should not like it, she should have neither desk, ink, paper, nor pens; in all properly ordered households the husband should do all the writing."

MAXIM VIII.

"Those disorderly meetings, called fashionable assemblies, corrupt every day the minds of women. In all well-regulated families they should be suppressed, for it is there that the poor husbands are conspired against."

MAXIM IX.

"Every woman that would live in good repute should shun gambling as she would the plague; play is very enticing, and often drives a woman to risk her last stake."

MAXIM X.

"She ought to avoid all public promenades and picnics,* for, according to the wisest men, it is always the husband who pays for these entertainments."

MAXIM XI.

"She

ARN. You shall finish alone; and by-and-by I will explain to you these things properly in detail. I suddenly remember that I have a little business to attend to. I shall not be a minute, and shall be back presently. Go in, and treasure that book carefully. If the notary comes, tell him to wait for me a moment.

(*Exit AGNES.*)

* *Cadeaux*: the meaning of this word as used by Molière, here and in several other places, is picnic. See second verse of this same maxim in French: "Repas qu'on donne aux champs."

SCENE III.—ARNOLPHE.

I can't do better than to make her my wife. I shall be able to mould her entirely according to my wishes. She is like a piece of wax in my hands, and I can give her the form I like. She had a narrow escape during my absence, thanks to her great simplicity, but after all it is better that a wife should err from this cause. It is easy to remedy such errors. All simple people are attentive to instruction, and if she is made to deviate from the right path, a warning word will be sufficient to make her return to it. But a clever woman is another kind of animal; * our fate depends entirely on her; nothing can make her change her mind, and all our precepts are lost upon her. She employs her wit to scoff at our maxims, twists her crimes into virtues, and can find ways to deceive the most dexterous in order to bring about her own wicked ends. A man tries in vain to defend himself; a clever woman is a devil at intrigue, and when her caprice has decided we should lose our honour . . . why . . . we must. A great many honest people will tell you as much.—Never fear, my young gentleman shall have no occasion of boasting; his indiscretion has its reward. This is the common fault of Frenchmen, they can never keep the secret of their good fortune, it is too much for them, and senseless vanity has such power over them, that they would rather go and hang themselves than not talk. The devil must be very strong in women when they prefer such shallow fools, and that . . . But here he comes. I must dissemble, and find out how he bears his disappointment.

SCENE IV.—HORACE, ARNOLPHE.

HOR. I have just been to your house. The fates seem to have decided that I shall never meet you there. However, I shall go so often that at last . . .

ARN. Pooh, pooh! don't let us think of these idle compliments; nothing vexes me so much as ceremony, and if I could have my own way, all this would for ever be abolished. It is a wretched custom, and most people waste

* See Sc. vii. 'Critique de L'École des Femmes,' p. 383.

a third of their time at it. Let us put on our hats without any more ceremony (*puts on his hat*). Well, and your love affairs? Tell me, Horace, how you are getting on? I was pre-occupied this afternoon, but since then I have thought a great deal about it. I admire the rapid progress you at once made, and I am greatly interested in the issue.

HOR. Since I told you the secret of my heart, things have not gone quite straight.

ARN. Oh! oh! you don't say so?

HOR. Yes, cruel fortune has brought back my fair one's guardian from the country.

ARN. What a misfortune!

HOR. But more, to my great sorrow he knows what has taken place between us.

ARN. How the deuce could he have learnt it so soon?

HOR. I don't know, but it is a fact. I was going at the usual hour to pay my visit to the dear girl, when both the servants, with altered look and voice, prevented me from going in, and with a—"Get out, you bother us!" very rudely slammed the door in my face.

ARN. Slammed the door in your face?

HOR. In my face.

ARN. Now, come, that was too bad.

HOR. I tried to speak to them through the door, but to all I could say they only answered, "You shan't come in, master has said you mustn't."

ARN. And they would not open?

HOR. No. From the window, Agnes also confirmed the master's return, and bidding me begone in a very angry tone of voice, flung at the same time a paving-stone at me.*

ARN. What do you say? a paving-stone?

HOR. And it was no small one either with which she saluted me.

ARN. The deuce! that was no joke; I am afraid your affair is in a sad state.

HOR. Yes, it is true, his unlucky return sadly puts me out.

* "*Grès*." Molière's critics did not fail to show the oddity of Agnes making use of such missiles. But it is clear that he could not have intended an ordinary square paving-stone.

ARN. I assure you that I am very sorry for you.

HOR. That man upsets all my plans.

ARN. Yes, but that's nothing; you'll find means of setting yourself all right again.

HOR. Yes, I must try by some scheme or other to defeat the strict vigilance of the jealous fellow.

ARN. You will easily do that; for, after all, the girl loves you.

HOR. There's no doubt about that.

ARN. You will gain your ends.

HOR. I hope so.

ARN. The stone rather perplexed you; but you cannot be surprised at it.

HOR. Certainly not. I understood at once that my man was there directing everything without being seen. But what took me by surprise, and what will surprise you also, is another incident I will tell you of, a bold thing the young beauty did, and which I never should have expected before. It must be confessed that love is a skilful master: he teaches us to be what we have never been before, and often in a moment makes a complete change in us. Suddenly, and as it were by a miracle, he alters our very nature within us. In an instant he makes a prodigal of a miser, a hero of a coward, an obliging man of a churl. He renders the dullest soul active, and gives wit to the most simple. This last miracle is most conspicuous in Agnes, for cutting my visit short with these words, "Cease your visits; I know all you have to say, and there is my answer," the stone which astonished you fell with a letter at my feet. I am lost in wonder at seeing how well this letter corresponds with the words which she spoke when she threw the stone. Are you not surprised at such an action? Is it not true that love knows how to sharpen the intellect? and can anyone deny that his powerful influence effects amazing changes in every heart? What do you say to all this? What do you think of the letter? Tell me, do you not admire her cleverness? Is it not ludicrous to see what a part our jealous guardian has played in all this game? Now, isn't it?

ARN. Yes . . . it's very ludicrous.

HOR. Do let me see you laugh. (ARNOLPHE forces a

laugh.) To think of this man who takes fire at once against my love, who shuts himself up, and makes use of paving stones as missiles as if I were about to storm his house, who in his terrible fright makes the servants drive me away—I say, to think of this man being deceived under his very nose and by the girl he has kept in gross ignorance, and that too by means of his own invention, is to my mind most comical; and although his return, I acknowledge, seriously embarrasses my path, I cannot help laughing heartily when I think of it. But you don't seem to enjoy the fun half as much as you should.

ARN. (*with a forced laugh*). I beg your pardon, I am laughing with all my might.

HOR. But I must show you her letter in confidence. All that her heart felt, her hand has written, and in terms so affecting, so full of goodness, innocent tenderness, and ingenuousness; in short, with the simple artlessness that pure nature expresses the first wound love gives.

ARN. (*aside*). This is the use you make of writing, you wicked girl; it was against my wish that it was ever taught you.

HOR. (*reads*). "*I want to write to you, but I am very much puzzled how to begin. I wish you to know the thoughts I have, but I do not know how to say them, and I dare not trust my words. As I begin to see that I have always been kept in ignorance, I am afraid of writing something which may not be right, or of saying more than I ought to say. To tell you the truth, I do not know what you have done to me, but I feel almost ready to die of vexation for what I am forced to do against you. I find it almost impossible not to see you again, and dearly wish I could be yours. Perhaps I am wrong in saying this, but somehow, I cannot help it, and I should like it to happen that there was no harm in it. I am told that young men are all false, that no one should listen to them, and that all you said to me was only to deceive me; but I assure you that I cannot think that of you, and I am so deeply moved by your words that I could not possibly believe them to be false. Tell me frankly if they are so; for as I am without guile you would do a very wicked thing if you were to deceive me, and I think it would make me die of grief.*"

ARN. (*aside*). The jade!

HOR. What do you say?

ARN. I? nothing, I was only coughing.

HOR. Did you ever hear a more tender way of expressing one's self? In spite of the cursed endeavours of unjust tyranny, can genuine artlessness more beautifully reveal itself? Do you not think with me that it is a cruel shame to mar a noble soul and to desire to crush its brightness in ignorance and stupidity. Love has begun to tear aside the veil, and if by favour of some propitious star, I can treat as I wish this mere animal, this wretch, this boor, this puppy, this brute

ARN. Good-bye.

HOR. Why are you in such a hurry?

ARN. It just strikes me that I have an urgent piece of business to attend to.

HOR. But do you know any one, as she is so strictly guarded, who could gain admittance into the house? I make bold with you, as it is no new thing for friends to serve one another in such cases. For the moment, there is nobody there but people who watch me, and neither man nor maid, in spite of all I could do, will condescend to listen to me, as I have just found. I had in my service an old woman with a marvellous talent in such matters. She did me good service at first; but she died, poor woman, four days ago. Could you not think of something to help me?

ARN. Really I cannot, you will easily find some means without me.

HOR. Good-bye then; you see how I trust you.

SCENE V.—ARNOLPHE (*alone*).

I must dissemble before him. But how hard to conceal my burning anguish! What! a simpleton to have such ready wit! Ah! she affects simplicity before me, or else the devil himself has imbued her with cunning. Alas! that fatal letter will be the death of me. The wretch, I see, has gained her affections; he has shut me out of her heart and has taken my place there. This is despair and mortal anguish to me. I suffer doubly in being robbed of her heart, for not only is my love injured by it, but my

honour too. My vexation is extreme to find my place usurped; extreme to see my prudent schemes defeated. I know that in order to punish her rash love I have but to leave her to her own fate, and that I shall be revenged on her by herself! Still, it is a sad thing to lose what we love. Good heavens! after having made use of so much philosophy in my choice, why must I be so bewitched with her charms? She has neither relatives, friends, nor money; she abuses my care, my kindness and my tenderness, and yet, even after this vile trick, I love her still. Fool, are you not ashamed? Ah! I am bursting with rage; I am raving; I could give myself a thousand blows! I could . . . I shall go in again: but only to see how she looks after such base conduct. Heaven grant that I may be exempt from dishonour! Or, if it is to be, may I, at least, have to support me the fortitude with which some people bear these misfortunes.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—ARNOLPHE (*alone*).

I declare I can find rest nowhere. I am perplexed beyond measure to discover means, either at home or abroad, for upsetting the plans of this simpering young puppy. With what perfect calm the cruel girl received me! She is not a bit disturbed at what she has done, and although she has brought me to the brink of the grave, one would think, to look at her, that she has had nothing to do with it. The more composed she looked, the more provoked I felt, and the bitter wrath which rose within my heart seemed to increase tenfold the fierceness of my love for her. I was irritated; I was incensed against her, and yet I never saw her look more handsome. Her eyes never seemed so bright, never before did they inspire me with such violent love; I feel in my heart that it will be the death of me, if my evil destiny brings this disgrace upon me. What! Did I take her quite young to my home; have I reared her with such tenderness and precaution; have I indulged in the fondest hopes about her;

has my heart watched her growing charms, have I for thirteen long years petted and loved her for myself alone as I thought, in order that a young fool with whom she falls in love should run away with her before my face; and that, too, when she is already as good as half married to me? No, by heavens, my foolish young friend, by heavens, no! You will find me a match for you, and you shall have no cause to laugh at me.

SCENE II.—NOTARY, ARNOLPHE.

NOT. Ah, there he is! Good morning, sir, here I am quite ready to draw up the contract wanted.

ARN. (*thinking himself alone*). How must it be done?

NOT. It must be in the usual form.

ARN. (*thinking himself alone*). I must use all kind of precautions.

NOT. Be sure that I shall do nothing contrary to your interest.

ARN. (*thinking himself alone*). I must guard against all surprise.

NOT. It is enough that you have trusted your affairs to me. You must not by any means, for fear of being cheated, sign the contract before you have received the dowry.

ARN. (*thinking himself alone*). I am afraid that if I disclose anything, it will become the talk of the whole town.

NOT. We may easily prevent all publicity, the contract can be drawn up privately.

ARN. (*thinking himself alone*). But how shall I settle it all with her?

NOT. Her settlement may be regulated according to the fortune she brings you.

ARN. (*thinking himself alone*). I love her, and it is that love which is my great difficulty.

NOT. In that case the settlement may be larger.

ARN. (*thinking himself alone*). How can I act towards her in such a case?

NOT. The custom is, that the husband that is to be, shall settle upon the wife the third part of her dowry; but this custom need not be followed, and if you care to give her more, you can do so.

ARN. (*thinking himself alone*). If . . . (*seeing the NOTARY*).

NOT. As to what preference* in the property you may mean to give to the survivor after the death of the one or the other of you, what I do say is, that the husband may settle upon the wife what jointure he will.

ARN. What?

NOT. He may give her more, when he feels great love for her, and wishes to oblige her. He may make whatever jointure he likes on her, and it may revert to the grantor at her death, or may not so revert, but may descend to her heirs. Or he may make the customary jointure if desired. Or he may make a special settlement, which may be done by him or mutually. Why do you shrug your shoulders? Am I talking like a fool? Do you think I do not understand marriage contracts? Who could teach me? Nobody, I fancy. Do I not know that once married, people have an equal right in all personal and real property, in all money, whether acquired before or after marriage, unless such right is expressly renounced. Do I not know that a third part of the settlement of the wife falls into the common estate in order that . . .

ARN. Yes, no doubt you know all this; but who asked you for it?

NOT. You, who seem to take me for a fool; shrugging up your shoulders, and making grimaces.

ARN. Plague take the fellow and his ugly face. There, good-morning: that is the way to shut you up.

NOT. Did you not send for me to draw up a contract?

ARN. Yes, I sent for you; but the thing is put off, and we will send for you again when we want you. Did you ever see such a jabbering fellow? (*Exit.*)

NOT. I thought he was crazy, and I see I am not mistaken.

SCENE III.—THE NOTARY, ALAIN, GEORGETTE.

NOT. Did you not come to fetch me for your master?

AL. Yes.

* See the 'Code Napoléon' for explanations of *preciput*, &c.

NOT. I don't know what you take him for; but you may go and tell him from me that he is an out and out fool.

GEOR. We will be sure to do so. (*Exit NOTARY.*)

SCENE IV.—ARNOLPHE, ALAIN, GEORGETTE.

AL. Master

ARN. Come near me; you are my faithful, my good and true friends; I know it for certain.

AL. The Notary

ARN. Never mind him, it is put off to another day. Listen to me. Some one has formed a base intrigue against my honour. What disgrace it would be for you, children, if your master's honour were taken away. After that, you could go nowhere without people pointing at you. Therefore, since it concerns you as much as it does me, you must, on your side, take such care that the gallant may not be able in any way

GEOR. Yes, you told us this afternoon what to do.

ARN. But be careful you do not listen to his fine speeches.

AL. If I do, may

GEOR. We know how not to listen to him.

ARN. But suppose he came in a coaxing tone: "Alain, my dear Alain, comfort my languishing heart by a little help."

AL. You are a fool.

ARN. That's right. (*to GEORGETTE*) "Georgette, my darling, you look so sweet and so good-tempered"

GEOR. You are a simpleton.

ARN. Very good. (*to ALAIN*) "What harm is there, do you think, in an honest and virtuous scheme?"

AL. You are a knave.

ARN. Very well. (*to GEORGETTE*) "I shall certainly die, unless you take pity on my sufferings."

GEOR. You are a booby and an impudent fellow.

ARN. Capital! (*to ALAIN*) "I am not a man to wish anything done for nothing. I never forget a service rendered to me. Here, Alain, here is something for you to drink; and, Georgette, here is something to buy you a petticoat. (*They both hold out their hands and take the*

money.) This is only an earnest of what I will do for you. All the favour I ask of you is, that you should let me see your pretty mistress."

GEOR. (*pushing him away*). None of your tricks here!

ARN. That's good.

AL. (*pushing him away*). Get along with you!

ARN. Very good.

GEOR. (*pushing him*). And directly too!

ARN. Hold, that will do.

GEOR. Don't I do it well?

AL. Is that the way to do it?

ARN. Yes, it is very good, except for the money, which you should not have taken.

GEOR. We did not remember that part.

AL. Shall we begin again?

ARN. No, that's enough; go in now, both of you.

AL. We are quite ready you know.

ARN. No, I tell you. Go in when I wish you. Keep the money. I will soon be with you again, have an eye to everything, and back me up well.

SCENE V.—ARNOLPHE (*alone*).

The cobbler who lives at the corner of the street will be a trustworthy spy. I shall keep Agnes at home, and will not stir from it myself; and I shall, above all, banish all ribbon-sellers, wig-makers, hair-dressers, milliners, handkerchief-makers, glove-sellers, dealers in left-off clothes, and all those people whose underhand business is to forward love-intrigues. I have seen the world, and understand all its tricks, and my man must be wonderfully sharp if any message or love-letter finds its way in there.

SCENE VI.—HORACE, ARNOLPHE.

HOR. What a lucky place this is for me, I always meet you here. You don't know what a narrow escape I have had. When I left you, I saw Agnes quite unexpectedly in her balcony, enjoying the cool breezes from the neighbouring trees. She made me a sign, and managed to come down in the garden and open the door to me. But we

were hardly in her room, when she heard her jealous guardian coming upstairs, and all she could do in such an emergency was to lock me up in a large wardrobe. I had only just got in when he came. I could not see him, but I could hear him walking about hastily. He didn't say a word, but ever and anon sighed piteously; gave great thumps upon the table, kicked a poor little dog that whined after him, threw right and left whatever fell under his hand; and even broke in his rage some vases with which the dear girl had adorned her mantel-piece. Somebody must certainly have informed the idiot of the trick she has played him. At last, after having walked up and down a great many times, and vented his fury upon a hundred helpless innocents, our restless, jealous old gentleman, without explaining what was the cause of his trouble, left the room, and I, my packing-case. We would not stop longer together for fear of his coming back,—it was risking too much,—but I am to go to-night to her room. I shall cough three times; Agnes on hearing me will open the window, and with her help and a ladder I hope to gain admittance. I tell you all this, because you are my only friend. Joy increases by being told to another, and even when our happiness is most perfect, we are not satisfied unless some kind heart knows of it. I feel sure you will rejoice in my good fortune. Farewell, I must go and get everything ready. (*Exit HORACE.*)

SCENE VII.—ARNOLPHE.

What! Will the ill-fortune which seems bent on driving me to despair, never allow me time to breathe? Am I to see all my wisdom and vigilance defeated again and again by their mutual understanding? Am I to become the dupe, in my mature years, of a simpleton and a shallow-brained young fool? For twenty years, like a wise philosopher, I have been contemplating the hard fate of husbands. For twenty years I have taken careful note of all the accidents which cause the misfortunes of the wisest, and have thought to profit by the disgrace of others. When thinking of taking a wife, I sought to save my forehead from all insult, and to guard it from being

put on the same level with those of other men, and thought I had taken towards this noble end all the precautions human wisdom could devise. But, as if it were decreed that no man here below should be exempt from it, after all the light and experience I could gather on the subject, after all these years devoted to the meditation of prudence and caution, have I avoided the common paths followed by so many husbands to see myself involved, after all, in the same disgrace? No! cursed destiny, I will give thee the lie! I have still in my power the object of the struggle; if her heart is stolen from me by this hateful youth, I will at least prevent him from seizing anything else; and this night chosen for their intrigue shall not be passed so agreeably as they imagine. It is some pleasure to me, in the midst of my misfortune, to be so well informed of all the snares laid for me, and to see this thoughtless young fellow, who thinks of outdoing me, make a confidant of his own rival.

SCENE VIII.—CHRYSLALDE, ARNOLPHE.

CHRYSL. Well! Shall we have supper before our walk?

ARN. No, I shall fast to-night.

CHRYSL. Why this sudden whim?

ARN. Pray excuse me, I have some anxious business on hand.

CHRYSL. Will not your intended marriage take place?

ARN. You are troubling yourself too much with other people's business.

CHRYSL. Oh, oh! how touchy you are! What's the matter now, good friend? Has anything gone wrong with your love? I can almost swear it is so by the look of your face.

ARN. Whatever happens to me, I shall at least have the advantage of being unlike certain people who tolerate readily lovers' visits.

CHRYSL. It is a strange thing that with all your discernment you should always be up in arms about these matters, that you should make your supreme happiness depend on no other kind of honour in this world. To be a miser, a brute, a scoundrel, a bully, and a coward, is nothing, in your opinion, compared with this stain, and

in whatever way a man may spend his life, he is a man of honour if his wife is virtuous. In spite of all that can be said, why will you suppose that our reputation depends on such an accident, and that a noble soul should reproach itself for the injustice of an evil which he cannot help? Yes, why will you maintain that, when we take a wife, we ought to become worthy of praise or blame according to her behaviour, or that we should conjure up some frightful picture of the affront that is done to us by her want of fidelity? Be sure that it is possible for a man of honour to take a milder view of accidents like these. As none of us are secure from the strokes of fate, we ought to look upon such mishaps with indifference. To say the truth, whatever the world may pretend, the evil lies only in the way of accepting these sorts of things, and in order to act rightly we must, as in all else, avoid extremes. We should not imitate those over-indulgent people, who are actually proud of such affairs, who speak everywhere of their wives' lovers, praise them, cry up their good qualities, make a show of great sympathy for them, assist at all their entertainments, and all their assemblies, and so act, that people may well wonder at their boldness in showing their faces there. Such conduct is really most offensive; but neither is the other extreme justifiable. If I do not approve of those friends of their wives' lovers, I do not approve either of those violent people whose indiscreet outbursts of rage and fury attract by their noise the attention of everybody, and who seem determined that no one shall remain ignorant of what has happened to them. Between these two extremes there is a middle course for a prudent man, and when we know how to take it there is no occasion to blush, whatever harm a wife may do to us. In short, say what you will, such a state of things can easily be looked down upon with less horror, and, as I have already explained, all our abilities should go to make the best of our trouble.

ARN. After such a fine speech all the deceived husbands should thank your lordship, and whoever hears you talk will be anxious to belong to the fraternity.

CHRY. I do not mean that, I blame it. But as it is to fate we owe the kind of wife we have, I say that we should

act in this as we do when we play at dice, if we have not what we want, we use dexterity, and resignedly try to mend our luck by care and attention.

ARN. Which means that we should sleep and eat at ease, and persuade ourselves that all goes well.

CHRY. You may laugh, but, to tell you the truth, I see a hundred things which I should consider a greater misfortune. Do you think, for instance, that if I had to choose between two evils, I should not prefer to be what you say, than to see myself the husband of one of those self-righteous women whose bad temper is a constant source of quarrelling? One of those dragons of virtue, those respectable she-devils, who are always entrenching themselves behind their unflinching virtue? Who, because they spare us a small wrong, assume the right to treat us haughtily, and expect as a reward for their fidelity that we should bear everything else from them? Once more, my friend, let me tell you that such a state of things is not altogether as you make out; that in some cases one might almost wish for it, and that there are compensations to be found there as in everything else.*

ARN. If you like it, by all means let it be so; but for me I have no inclination that way, and rather than submit to such a thing

CHRY. Pray do not swear, you may commit perjury. If it is so decreed, your endeavours will all be in vain, and your thoughts on the subject will not be asked.

ARN. I? I should be

CHRY. You need not cry out so! You would be no worse off than a thousand people, who, without any disparagement to you—in person, courage, wealth, and family—would think it an affront to be compared with you.

ARN. And I wish to bear no comparison with them. But this raillery is unpleasant to me, let us have no more of it, if you please.

CHRY. You are angry. We shall know why by and by. Farewell. But whatever you may think, remember that he who swears he will never be a what we were talking about, is already half one.

* See Notes at end of first volume.

ARN. I swear it, and I am going this instant to make use of a good remedy against that accident.

(Knocks at his own door.)

SCENE IX.—ARNOLPHE, ALAIN, GEORGETTE.

ARN. My friends, now has the time come for me to implore your help. I am quite satisfied of your love for me, but you must give me proofs of it on this occasion, and if you serve me, as I trust you will, you may be sure that I will reward you. The man you know of (mind you say nothing about it) means to play me a trick to-night, and by the help of a ladder to get into Agnes' room. But we three must lay a trap for him. I wish each of you to take a thick stick, and when he is almost at the top of the ladder (for I will open the window in the meantime) you must both fall upon him, and in such a manner that his back may keep it in remembrance. It will keep him from coming here again. Be careful you make no mention of me at all, nor let him understand that I am acting in concert with you. Shall you have the courage to help me in my anger?

AL. Well, sir, if beating will do the business, it will be all right; you will see whether, when I strike, my arm is marrowless.

GEOR. Although my arm may not look so strong, yet you shall see that it can give him a good drubbing.

ARN. Go in then; and, above all things, mind you don't babble. *(alone)* This will be a good lesson for my neighbours; and if all the husbands in the town received their wives' lovers after such a fashion, the number of cuckolds would be less.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—ARNOLPHE, ALAIN, GEORGETTE.

ARN. Wretches, what have you done by your violence?

AL. Sir, we have obeyed you.

ARN. It's no use your trying to lay the blame on me, I

ordered you to beat him, I did not tell you to murder him; and it was upon his back and not upon his head, that I asked you to strike. Heavens! in what a plight does this accident place me! and what can I do, now the man is dead? Go in, and be sure you do not say a word of the harmless order I gave you. (*Exeunt ALAIN and GEORGETTE.*) It will soon be daylight, and I must consider how I am to act under this misfortune. Alas! What will become of me? And what will the father say when the news of this affair suddenly reaches him?

SCENE II.—ARNOLPHE, HORACE.

HOR. (*aside*). I must go and discover who it is.

ARN. (*thinking himself alone*). Who could ever have foreseen (*he is run against by HORACE*) Who goes there?

HOR. Is it you, Mr. Arnolphe?

ARN. Yes, but who are you?

HOR. I was going to your house to beg a favour of you. You are out very early?

ARN. (*aside*). What is the meaning of this? Is it enchantment? Is it a vision?

HOR. To tell you the truth, I was in the greatest trouble, and I thank the great goodness of Heaven in allowing me to meet you thus at the right moment. I must tell you that all has succeeded beyond my expectations, and that, through an accident which threatened to ruin everything. I cannot understand how our appointment for to-night came to be discovered; but just as I was reaching the window, I saw people I little expected, who, raising their arms furiously at me, made me miss my footing, and fall headlong on the ground. This saved me from a serious beating I feel sure, and I escaped with a few bruises caused by my fall. These people, no doubt among whom was the jealous guardian, imagined that my fall had been caused by their blows, and as the pain I felt compelled me to lie a good while motionless on the spot, they made sure that they had killed me, and became very much alarmed. I heard all they said in profound silence; they blamed one another for that violent deed, and came without any light,

all the time accusing fate, gently to feel if I were dead. I leave you to imagine, if I played the dead man ! They withdrew in a terrible fright, and as I was thinking of going away myself, who should come with the greatest concern to me but Agnes, shocked at the report of my supposed death. She had heard all that these people said in their terror, and as they had forgotten to keep watch over her during the affray, she easily escaped from the house and rushed towards me. However, when she found that I was not hurt, she gave way to a transport of joy which I can hardly describe. What more need I say ? the charming girl followed the dictates of her own heart, would not return to her home, and has committed herself entirely to my honour. You can judge by this innocent decision to what dangers the conduct of that overbearing fool exposes her, and what sad risk she would now run if I loved her less. But my passion for her is too pure and too sincere, and I had rather die than wrong her. I see her endowed with gifts worthy of a better fate, and nothing but death shall part me from her. I foresee what my father's anger will be ; but we will watch for an opportunity to make him forgive us. I yield myself to the delightful power her charms have over me, and after all, we cannot have everything in life. What I want of you now is, relying as I do on your secrecy and sincerity, to place her under your care, and to ask you to give her the hospitality in your house for a day or two, because of the interest you bear my love. For, not only must her flight be kept secret, to prevent all pursuits after her from being successful, but, beautiful as she is, she would be strangely suspected, if she were to be seen in the company of a young man. Besides, as I have trusted you with the whole story of my love, because I feel sure of your prudence, for the same reason to you alone, my generous friend, can I trust my beloved treasure.

ARN. Believe that I am entirely at your service.

HOR. You will render me the great favour I ask of you ?

ARN. I do it most willingly, I tell you, and I am delighted to have this opportunity of serving you ; I thank Heaven for having put it in my power, and I never before did anything with so much pleasure.

HOR. How thankful I am to you for all your kindness! I was afraid you would make some difficulty. But you know the world, and in your wisdom you can excuse the ardour of youth. She is under the care of one of my servants at the corner of this street.

ARN. But how shall we manage, for it is almost daylight. If I take her here, I run the risk of being seen, and if you have to come to my house the servants will talk. It will be safer for you to bring her to me in a darker place; the passage in my house is the very thing we want, I will wait for her there.

HOR. You are right to think of all these precautions. I will only just bring her to you and return at once to my rooms.

ARN. (*alone*). Ah, fortune! this stroke of luck will undo all the harm thy caprice has done me!

(*Wraps himself up in his cloak.*)

SCENE III.—AGNES, ARNOLPHE, HORACE.

HOR. Do not be anxious about the place to which I am leading you. You will find a safe retreat there, for if I were to take you with me, all would be ruined. Go through that door, and wherever this gentleman leads you. (*ARNOLPHE takes her hand without her recognising him.*)

AGN. (*to HORACE*). Why do you leave me?

HOR. It must be so, dear Agnes.

AGN. Mind then, you return very soon.

HOR. Ah! my love.

AGN. I am not happy when I do not see you.

HOR. I, too, am sad away from you.

AGN. Alas! If this were true, you would stop near me now.

HOR. What, Agnes, can you doubt my great love for you?

AGN. Ah! you do not love me as much as I love you. (*ARNOLPHE pulls her away.*) Oh! you pull me too hard.

HOR. Dear Agnes, it is because it would be dangerous for you, if we were seen together in this place; and this true friend, who presses you to go with him, is anxious for our sake.

AGN. But why must I follow a stranger? I do not....

HOR. Fear nothing, you are altogether safe in his hands.

AGN. I should think myself much happier in yours, and I should.... (*to ARNOLPHE who pulls her again*) Wait a moment.

HOR. Farewell. Daylight drives me away.

AGN. When shall I see you again?

HOR. Very soon, believe me.

AGN. How sad I shall feel till then!

HOR. (*going away*). Thank Heaven my happiness is no longer threatened, and I can now sleep in peace.

SCENE IV.—ARNOLPHE, AGNES.

ARN. (*muffled up in his cloak and disguising his voice*). Come, it is not here I want to lodge you, I have a home ready for you elsewhere. I mean to take you where you will be pretty safe, I can tell you. (*making himself known*) Do you know me?

AGN. Ha!

ARN. You wicked girl, you are afraid to look at me at such a moment, and would rather not see me here. I disturb your fine love dreams, do I? (*AGNES looks if she can see HORACE*.) You need not look for your lover, he is too far to come to your help. Ha, ha! young as you are, you can play such tricks! Do you, with unequalled simplicity, inquire if children come by the ear, and yet give appointments by night, in order to steal away unnoticed with your lover? Oh! oh! how tenderly you can talk to him! You surely must have been at some good school! Who the deuce has taught you all this so suddenly? You are no longer afraid of ghosts, it seems, and this lover has made you bold in the night time? Ah! cruel girl, to think of such perfidy, in spite of all I have done for you! Viper, that I have warmed in my bosom, and which, as soon as it feels itself revive, ungratefully tries to injure him that caressed it!

AGN. Why do you scold me?

ARN. I am very much to blame, am I not?

AGN. I have done no harm in all this.

ARN. What! to run away with a lover is not a shameful action?

AGN. He tells me that he wants me for his wife. I followed your instructions; for did you not tell me that we must marry to take away the sin.

ARN. Yes; but I myself intended to take you for a wife, and it seems to me that I had made you sufficiently understand it.

AGN. Yes; but to speak to you openly, he is more to my taste for a husband than you are. You make marriage a burdensome, dull, uncomfortable thing, and give a terrible description of it; but, ah me! he represents it as so full of pleasure that he makes me long to be married.

ARN. Ah! traitress, it is because you love him.

AGN. Yes, I do indeed love him!

ARN. And you have the impudence to tell me so?

AGN. And why, if it is true, should I not say it?

ARN. Ought you to have loved him, impertinent hussy?

AGN. Alas! how could I help it? He alone is the cause of it; and I had no idea of it before it was done.

ARN. But you should have driven away the desire to love.

AGN. But how drive away what pleases me so much?

ARN. Did you not know that it would displease me?

AGN. I never thought of that. What harm can it do you?

ARN. Ay, ay, no doubt. I ought to rejoice at it! Then, at this rate, you do not love me?

AGN. You?

ARN. Yes.

AGN. Alas! no.

ARN. How, no?

AGN. You would not have me tell an untruth, surely?

ARN. And why do you not love me, Miss Impudence?

AGN. Indeed! you should not blame me; why did you not make me love you, as he did? I have not hindered you, I think.

ARN. I have done all in my power for it, but my pains were to no purpose.

AGN. Then he knows much more about it than you do, for he had no difficulty whatever in making me love him.

ARN. (*aside*). Just hear how the hussy answers and argues. The deuce! if any of our précieuses could have said more! Ah! I was wrong in my opinion of her, for indeed, in such cases, a foolish woman understands more than the cleverest man. (*to AGNES*) Since you are so clever with all your reasoning, Miss Sophistry, tell me if you think it is for his sake that I have maintained, brought you up, and kept you for so long at my own charge?

AGN. Oh, no. But he will pay you back to the last farthing.

ARN. (*aside*). She says things which increase my vexation tenfold. (*aloud*) Is it in his power, ungrateful girl, to repay all the obligations you have to me?

AGN. They are not after all so great as you say.

ARN. Is it nothing to have taken care of your education from your infancy?

AGN. You have indeed done great wonders in this respect, and have instructed me finely. Do you imagine that I am so blind as not to feel in my own mind that I am stupid? I, myself, am ashamed of it, and, if I can help it, I will not now, at my age, be ignorant any longer.

ARN. You hate ignorance, and you are resolved, at any cost, to learn something from your lover?

AGN. Certainly. It is he who has taught me what I know; and, in my opinion, I owe him more than I do you.

ARN. I don't know what hinders me from punishing you with a good box on the ear for this saucy language! I am provoked beyond myself by your unfeeling coldness, and it would do me no end of good to give you a few blows.

AGN. Alas! You may do so, if it can give you pleasure.

ARN. (*aside*). Her words and look disarm my anger, and bring back to my heart a flow of tenderness which effaces all her guilt. What a strange thing love is! and to what weakness men are subject, when captivated by these cruel women! Every one knows their imperfections; they are nothing but extravagance and indiscretion: their mind is wicked and their understanding weak; nothing is more frail, more feeble, and more false, and yet, every-

thing in the world is done to please the animals. (*to AGNES*) Well, let us make peace. I forgive you everything, cruel girl, and will love you as I did before; judge from that of the depth of my tenderness for you, and seeing me so good, love me in return.

AGN. I would with all my heart oblige you; it would cost me nothing if I only could.

ARN. My dear little pet, you can if you will. Only listen to these longing sighs, mark this dying look, contemplate my person, and leave that young fop and the love you have for him. He must certainly have cast some spell upon you, and you will be a hundred times happier with me. Your greatest desire is to go about finely dressed, and I promise you that it shall be so. I will caress you night and day, I will fondle you, cuddle you, devour you with kisses! You shall do whatever you like: I need say nothing else. (*aside*) What strange things love makes one do! (*aloud*) In a word, nothing can be compared to my love. What proof do you want, ungrateful one? Will you see me weep? Shall I beat myself? Tear off half my hair? Shall I kill myself? Speak, say what you wish, I will do it, cruel one, to convince you of my love.

AGN. All you say there does not touch my heart; and Horace could do more with a couple of words.

ARN. Oh! this is too much, you brave me too long. I will follow up my own designs, you unyielding creature. You shall leave the town this moment. You reject my love and drive me to extremities; a convent cell shall revenge me of all.

SCENE V.—ARNOLPHE, AGNES, ALAIN.

AL. I don't know how it is, sir; but I fancy that Agnes and the dead body went away together.

ARN. Here she is. Go and lock her up in my own room. (*aside*) He will not come and seek her there; besides, it is only for half an hour. I will go and fetch a carriage to take her to a safe place. (*to ALAIN*) Lock yourselves up carefully, be sure you do not let her go out of your sight. (*alone*) A change of scene may make her forget all about this love.

SCENE VI.—HORACE, ARNOLPHE.

HOR. Oh! I come to you, overwhelmed with grief; for Heaven, Mr. Arnolphe, has decreed my ruin! By means of a most unjust act, it has been resolved to separate me from her I love. To reach this place, my father has travelled during the cool of the night, and I find that he has alighted close by. I will tell you in a few words the cause of his coming—I have already told you that I did not know before;—he has married me without telling me anything about it, and he comes here to celebrate this marriage. You, who understand my anxiety, can judge if a greater disappointment could have happened to me. It is this Enrique—concerning whom I inquired of you yesterday—who causes this ruin of my hopes. He has come with my father; and it is to his only daughter that I am to be united. I felt as if I could have fainted away from the first moment they mentioned it; and, my father having spoken of coming to see you, I would not stop to listen to them, and came here in haste and full of consternation, in order to be beforehand with him. I beseech you, take care not to let him know anything about my engagement here, for it might, perhaps, make him angry, but try, as he puts the greatest confidence in you, to dissuade him from this marriage.

ARN. Oh, yes.

HOR. Advise him to put the matter off a while; and, as a friend, I beg you thus to assist me in my love.

ARN. I will not fail.

HOR. All my hopes are placed in you.

ARN. They are well placed.

HOR. I look upon you as my own father. Tell him that my age . . . Ah! I see him coming, I will tell you all you can say to him.

(HORACE and ARNOLPHE withdraw to one end of the stage and whisper together.)

SCENE VII.—ENRIQUE, ORONTE, CHRYSALDE, HORACE,
ARNOLPHE.

ENR. *(to CHRYS.)* As soon as I saw you, though I had

not been told who you were, I knew you. I saw at once in you the features of your lovely sister whom marriage once made mine. Happy should I have been, if cruel destiny had suffered me to bring back that faithful wife to enjoy with me, after our long misfortunes, the delight of seeing all her relations again. But since we must be for ever deprived of her dear presence, let us try to find some comfort for our grief in the only fruit that remains of our love. She is dear to you, and I should do wrong to dispose of her without your consent. I have made in the son of Oronte, a choice honourable in itself; but you must be satisfied as well as I.

CHRY. It is to have a bad opinion of my judgment, if you think that I can hesitate to approve so good a choice.

ARN. (*aside to HORACE*). Yes, I will serve you in the best manner.

HOR. (*aside to ARNOLPHE*). Once more, be careful you

ARN. (*aside to HORACE*). Do not be afraid. (*ARNOLPHE leaves HORACE to go and embrace ORONTE.*)

ORON. (*to ARNOLPHE*). Ah! how delighted I am to embrace you!

ARN. What happiness it is for me to see you!

ORON. I come to

ARN. You need not tell me, I know what brings you.

ORON. You have been told already?

ARN. Yes.

ORON. So much the better.

ARN. Your son is very much against this marriage, for his heart being engaged already, he looks upon this alliance as a misfortune; he even begged of me to try and dissuade you from it; however, all the advice I can give you is, not to defer the wedding, but to make use of your authority as a father. Young people should be governed with a firm hand, and we do them harm if we indulge them.

HOR. (*aside*). Ah, traitor!

CHRY. If it is against his inclination, I think that we ought not to force him. I feel sure that my brother will think like me.

ARN. What! would he suffer his son to rule over him?

Would you have a father so weak as not to know how to force youth to obey? It would be a fine thing, indeed, to see him, at his age, receive laws from one who ought to receive them from him! No, no; he is my intimate friend, his honour is mine; his word is given, and he should keep it. Let him now show himself firm, and dispose of his son.

ORON. You are right, and, as regards this marriage, I answer for his obedience.

CHRY. (*to ARNOLPHE*). But I am quite surprised at the great eagerness you show for this marriage to take place, and cannot understand what can be the reasons which . . .

ARN. I know what I am doing, and am aware of what I ought to say.

ORON. Yes, yes, Mr. Arnolphe, he is . . .

CHRY. That name displeases him, I have already told you, he wishes to be called Mr. de la Souche.

ARN. Oh! it is no consequence.

HOR. (*aside*). What do I hear?

ARN. (*turning towards HORACE*). Yes, there is the mystery; and you can judge for yourself what I have to do.

HOR. (*aside*). Into what trouble . . .

SCENE VIII.—ENRIQUE, ORONTE, CHRYSALDE, HORACE,
ARNOLPHE, GEORGETTE.

GEOR. Sir, if you do not come, we shall find it difficult to keep Agnes; she is trying all she can to escape, and she will, perhaps, end by throwing herself out of the window.

ARN. Bring her to me, for I am ready this very moment to take her away. (*to HORACE*) Do not complain. An unbroken happiness would make man proud; and, "every one has his turn," as the proverb says.

HOR. (*aside*). Oh heavens! what misfortunes can equal mine! Was ever one plunged in such an abyss of misery as I?

ARN. (*to ORONTE*). Hasten the wedding day, I am greatly interested in it, and with your leave I invite myself to it already.

ORON. I intend to hasten it.

SCENE IX.—AGNES, ORONTE, ENRIQUE, ARNOLPHE, HORACE, CHRYSLADE, ALAIN, GEORGETTE.

ARN. (*to AGNES*). Come, fair one, come, you who are so wilful as to rebel against our authority. Here is your lover, make him a nice and pretty curtsy to reward him. (*to HORACE*) Farewell, the event has not turned exactly according to your wish; but all lovers are not fortunate.

AGN. Will you suffer him to carry me away in this manner, Horace?

HOR. I hardly know what I am doing, my misery is so great.

ARN. Come along, chatterbox; come along.

AGN. No, I shall stop here.

ORON. Will you explain to us what all this means? We are here looking at one another, and unable to understand it.

ARN. I will explain it all to you when we have more leisure. Farewell for the present.

ORON. But where is it you mean to go? You do not explain yourself as we expected.

ARN. I have advised you to complete the match in spite of all his murmuring.

ORON. Yes, but to complete it; if you have been told everything, you must know that you have in your house the person he is to marry: the daughter of the lovely Angelica, who was united secretly to Enrique. What could be the drift of what you said just now?

CHRY. I could not help wondering at his way of going on.

ARN. What?

CHRY. By a private marriage my sister had a daughter, whose birth was kept secret from the whole family.

ORON. And under a supposed name, to prevent discovery, this daughter was put out to nurse by her husband in the country.

CHRY. At this time misfortunes fell thick upon him, and he had to leave his native land.

ORON. And to undergo many great perils in those countries beyond the seas.

CHRY. There, by his industry, he acquired what in his native land injustice and envy had robbed him of.

ORON. On his return to France, his first care was to look for the person to whom he had entrusted his only child.

CHRY. Then the countrywoman frankly acknowledged that she had put her into your hands.

ORON. That she had been driven by extreme poverty to accept your charity.

CHRY. And Oronte, full of delight and happiness, brought the woman here with him.

ORON. She will be here in a few moments, to clear up this mystery before us all.

CHRY. (*to ARNOLPHE*). I guess pretty nearly what state of mind you are in; but in this affair fortune is very kind to you. Since not to be deceived by your wife is your supreme happiness, the best way to secure it is to remain unmarried.

(*ARNOLPHE goes away half suffocated by passion,
and unable to answer.*)

SCENE X.—ENRIQUE, ORONTE, CHRYSALDE, AGNES, HORACE.

ORON. Why is he running away in that fashion?

HOR. Ah, father! let me explain to you the whole mystery. Fate has here brought to pass what you in your wisdom had decided. I was engaged to this fair one by the ties of mutual love; in short, you have come to fetch her who was the cause of my refusing the different match I thought you had come to propose to me.

EN. From the moment I saw her, I never doubted who she was, and my heart yearns after her. Ah! my daughter, allow me to yield to such tender transports.

CHRY. I would do the same, brother, with all my heart, but this place is hardly fit for such effusions of tenderness. Let us go home to unravel this mystery, to discharge the obligations we owe to our friend, and thank Heaven who does all for the best.

THE SCHOOL FOR WIVES CRITICISED.

(LA CRITIQUE DE L'ÉCOLE DES FEMMES.)

‘La Critique de l’École des Femmes’ was played at the Palais Royal on the 1st of June, 1663. This comedy, in reality but a dialogue, is one of the finest satires ever written on criticism. Molière explains also what he considers to be the aim of Comedy.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

THE MARQUIS.

DORANTE, *or the Chevalier.*

LYSIDAS, *a poet.*

GALOPIN, *a footman.*

URANIE.

ÉLISE.

CLIMÈNE.

The scene is at Paris, in the house of URANIE.

THE SCHOOL FOR WIVES CRITICISED.

SCENE I.—URANIE, ÉLISE.

URAN. What ! cousin, has nobody been to see you ?

ÉLIS. Nobody at all.

URAN. Well, it is strange that we should both have been alone the whole of the day.

ÉLIS. It is strange indeed ; for it is not what happens to us generally, and your house, thank Heaven, is the refuge of all the loungers at Court.

URAN. I must confess that I have found the afternoon very long.

ÉLIS. And it has seemed very short to me.

URAN. Ah ! cousin, genius loves solitude.

ÉLIS. I am the very humble servant of your genius, but you know that I have no pretensions that way.

URAN. For my part I must confess that I like society.

ÉLIS. And so do I, but it must be select, and the number of foolish visits which are mixed up among the good ones, and which we have to endure, often makes me long for the pleasure of being alone.

URAN. To receive visits from chosen people only is to be over fastidious.

ÉLIS. To suffer with unconcern the visits of all sorts of people is to be too complaisant.

URAN. I enjoy the society of the reasonable, and divert myself with the folly of the fools.

ÉLIS. Upon my word, the fools soon weary me ! They cease to be amusing after their second visit. But while we are speaking of folly, will you not relieve me from your troublesome marquis ? Do you mean to leave him upon

my hands, and fancy that I can put up everlastingly with his stupid puns?

URAN. But it is the language of fashion, and it is a source of much merriment at Court.

ELIS. So much the worse for those who indulge in it, and who rack their brains all day long to talk this obscure jargon. A fine thing, indeed, to bring into the conversation of the Louvre, old quibbles picked up in the gutters of the market-places, and a pretty way of jesting for courtiers! How witty a man shows himself when he comes and tells you: "Madam, you are in the Place Royal, but everybody sees you three leagues from Paris, for everybody sees you *de bon œil*,"* because Bonneuil is a village three leagues off! Very pretty and witty, is it not? and those who hit upon these idle conceits, have they not something to be proud of?

URAN. Nobody thinks it witty, and most of those who affect this way of talking know how ridiculous it is.

ELIS. It is worse still to take pains to say silly things, and of set purpose to be a pitiful jester; I hold them the less excusable, and if I were judge, I know very well to what I should condemn all these clowns.

URAN. Let us drop this subject, for it excites you a little too much, and speak about Dorante, who is very late, I think, in coming to the supper we are to have together.

ELIS. Perhaps he has forgotten it, and that

SCENE II.—URANIE, ÉLISE, GALOPIN.

GAL. Madame, Climène is coming to see you.

URAN. Oh! goodness! What a visitation!

ELIS. You complained of being alone, and Heaven punishes you for it.

URAN. Go, quick, say that I am not at home.

GAL. She has already been told that you are.

URAN. And who is the idiot that told her so?

GAL. I, madam.

URAN. Plague take the little wretch! I will teach you to give answers of your own accord.

* With pleasure.

GAL. I will go and tell her, madam, that you do not wish to be at home.

URAN. Stop, you little donkey, and, since the mischief is done, show her upstairs.

GAL. She is still speaking to a gentleman in the street.

(Exit GALOPIN.)

URAN. Ah! cousin, how tiresome this visit is to me just now!

ELIS. Well, yes, she is naturally tiresome enough! I have the greatest dislike to her, and, begging her rank's pardon, she is the most stupid ass that ever made any pretence to sense.

URAN. The epithet is rather strong.

ELIS. Not a bit, not a bit, she well deserves it and more still, if one would only do her justice. Is there in the world a person who is more really a *précieuse*, taking the word in its very worst sense?*

URAN. She won't accept the name for all that.

ELIS. She rejects the name but not the thing, for she is a *précieuse* from head to foot, and the greatest piece of affectation imaginable. Her whole body seems loose, and her hips, shoulders, and head, to be moved by springs. She always affects a languishing, simpering tone of voice, screws up her mouth, to make believe that it is small, rolls her eyes to make them look large

URAN. Gently, gently, if she heard

ELIS. No, no, she is not coming up yet. I shall always remember the evening when she wanted to see Damon because of his reputation, and the different books he has published. You know the man and his natural indolence in keeping up a conversation. She had invited him to supper as a wit, but I never saw him look more stupid than he did among the half-a-dozen people for the entertainment of whom she had designed him, and who stared at him as if they expected him to be made in a different fashion from other folk. They all thought that he was there to amuse the company with his flashes of wit, and that every word which came out of his mouth would

* After the comedy of the '*Précieuses Ridicules*,' the word *précieuse* became in itself a term of ridicule, and later on, of contempt.

be something extraordinary. They expected him to make impromptus upon all that was said, and not so much as to ask for a glass of wine without a pun. But he disappointed them all by his silence, and our lady was as little satisfied with him as I was with her.

URAN. Be quiet, I am going to the door to receive her.

ELIS. Just one word more; how I should like to see her married to the Marquis we spoke of! What a splendid match it would make—a *précieuse* and a *turlupin*! *

URAN. Do be quiet, here she is.

SCENE III.—CLIMÈNE, URANIE, ÉLISE, GALOPIN.

URAN. Really, how very late

CLIM. Ah! my dear! I beg of you to make them give me a seat immediately.

URAN. (*to GALOPIN*). An arm-chair, at once.

CLIM. Oh dear!

URAN. What is the matter?

CLIM. I feel so ill.

URAN. What ails you?

CLIM. I shall surely faint.

URAN. Have you the vapours?

CLIM. No.

URAN. Shall I unlace you?

CLIM. No, no, thank you. Ah!

URAN. What is the matter then, and how long have you been suffering?

CLIM. About three hours; I was seized at the Palais-Royal.

URAN. How is that?

CLIM. I have just seen, as a punishment for my sins, that wretched rhapsody 'The School for Wives;' I still feel faint from the disgust it gave me, and I am sure I shall require a whole fortnight to be myself again.

ELIS. Just imagine how illness seizes us when we least expect it!

URAN. I don't know what constitution my cousin and I

* See Despois, p. 313.

possess, but we went to see that same play the day before yesterday, and we both came back healthy and well.

CLIM. What! have you seen it?

URAN. And we listened to it from beginning to end.

CLIM. You don't mean to say so, my dear, that you were not seized with convulsions?

URAN. No. I am not so delicate, I am thankful to say; and I think besides, that this comedy is more likely to cure people than to make them ill.

CLIM. Ah! my dear! what are you saying? Can such a proposition be advanced by a person with common sense in possession? Can any one with impunity throw down the gauntlet to reason as you do? And is there in simple verity, a mind so greedy of mirth as to enjoy the insipid jests with which that comedy is seasoned? For my part, I assure you, that I did not find the least grain of wit throughout the whole of it. *Children by the ear* seemed to me in detestable taste, *the cream tart* made me faint, and I was almost sick at *the soup*.

ELIS. Ah! how elegantly all this is said! I should have thought that the play was good, but you possess such persuasive eloquence, you turn things in such an agreeable manner, that, whatever may have been my opinion, I must perforce agree with you.

URAN. Well, I am not quite so yielding, and, to tell the truth, I consider this comedy one of the most amusing the author has yet produced.

CLIM. Ah! you excite my compassion when you speak thus, and I cannot bear to see such obscurity of discernment in you. Can a virtuous woman find pleasure in a play which keeps modesty under perpetual alarm, and which every moment sullies the imagination?

ELIS. What a charming way you have of expressing yourself! What a formidable critic you are, madam, and how I pity poor Molière in having you for an enemy!

CLIM. Yes, believe me my dear, correct your judgment in good earnest, and if you care for your reputation, do not tell any one that this comedy pleases you.

URAN. I do not see what you can find in it to offend modesty.

CLIM. What I can find? Ah me! everything! I maintain that a virtuous woman cannot see it without a feeling of shame, so much impurity and filth did I discover in it.

URAN. Then you must have a particular discernment for filth, for I certainly failed to see anything of the kind in it.

CLIM. Acknowledge that it is because you were determined not to see any. For, thank goodness, it was put forward openly enough. It has not the least shadow of a covering, and the most shameless are shocked at its nudity.

ELIS. Ah!

CLIM. Fie, it's dreadful to think of!

URAN. But still, pray point out to me some of these things you allude to.

CLIM. What! Is it necessary to point them out to you?

URAN. Yes, I only ask you to show me one of the passages that shock you so much.

CLIM. Do you want anything besides the scene of that Agnes when she tells what was taken from her?

URAN. Why! what do you find nasty in that?

CLIM. Ah!

URAN. Pray, tell me.

CLIM. Fie!

URAN. But still?

CLIM. I can say nothing more to you.

URAN. I do not see any harm in it.

CLIM. You do not? So much the worse for you.

URAN. Rather so much the better, it seems to me; I look at things as they are presented to me, and I do not twist them about to try and see what I ought not.

CLIM. A woman's modesty

URAN. A woman's modesty does not consist in grimace, and it ill becomes us to try and affect virtue beyond that of virtuous women. It is the worst form of affectation. I think nothing so ridiculous as that morbid delicacy which finds fault with everything, discovers immorality in the most innocent words, and is offended with mere shadows. Believe me, those women who make such a show of modesty

and prudishness provoke the censure of the world against the purest actions of their lives, and people are glad to discover whatever there may be to blame in them. As an example, the other day there were in the box facing ours some ladies who throughout the play turned their heads away, hid their faces, and made other affected gestures. They only caused a hundred foolish things to be said of them, which but for their conduct would have remained unsaid. Some footmen even cried out, that their ears were more chaste than all the rest of their bodies.

CLIM. In short we ought to be blind in this piece, and pretend not to see what there is to be seen.

URAN. We ought not to see what is not there.

CLIM. Ah! I maintain once more that the impurities stare you in the face.

URAN. And I beg to disagree

CLIM. What? Is not modesty visibly shocked by what Agnes says in the passage we are speaking of?

URAN. Why should it be? She does not say one word which is not in itself perfectly innocent, and if you choose to understand something else, it is you who manufacture the impropriety, not she; since she only speaks of a ribbon that was taken from her.

CLIM. Ribbon, indeed! what nonsense! And that *the* which she dwells upon is not put there without rhyme nor reason. It gives rise to many strange thoughts that *the*. That *the* is furiously scandalous; and, whatever you may say to the contrary, you can never excuse the impropriety of that *the*.

ELIS. It is true, cousin; I side with Climène against that *the*. That *the* is to the last degree improper, and you are utterly wrong to defend that *the*.

CLIM. Its obscenity * is unbearable.

ELIS. Ah! what new word is that?

CLIM. Obscenity.

ELIS. Ah! ah! obscenity. I don't know what the word may mean, but to my mind nothing can be prettier.

CLIM. You see that your own flesh and blood takes part against you.

* *Obscénité*, a word just introduced by the *Précieuses*.

URAN. Oh! she is a mere chatterbox, and does not say what she thinks. Do not trust her too much, believe me.

ELIS. How very wicked of you to try and make people suspect me! Just consider what would become of me if our friend here were to believe what you say. Am I so far unfortunate, madam, as to have you think this of me?

CLIM. No, no, I take no notice of what she says, and have more confidence in you than that.

ELIS. You are quite right, madam, and you only do me justice when you believe that I think you the most charming person in the world, that I enter into all your feelings, and that I am delighted with every expression you employ.

CLIM. Ah! believe me, I speak without affectation.

ELIS. No one can doubt, madam, that everything is natural in you. Your words, the tone of your voice, your looks, your step, your manners, and your dress have a certain aristocratic something about them that is truly enchanting. I study you with ears and eyes, and am so full of you that I try to ape you and to imitate you in everything.

CLIM. You are making fun of me, madam.

ELIS. No, madam, excuse me, no one could think of making fun of you?

CLIM. I am not a good model, madam.

ELIS. Oh, yes, madam.

CLIM. You flatter me, madam.

ELIS. Not at all, madam.

CLIM. Nay, spare me, madam, I beg of you.

ELIS. I do spare you, madam; I do not say half what I think, madam.

CLIM. Let us, I beg of you, talk of something else; you put me in a most terrible confusion. (*to URANIE*) In short, you see that we are both against you, and obstinacy so ill becomes people of intellect that . . .

SCENE IV.—THE MARQUIS, CLIMÈNE, URANIE, ÉLISE,
GALOPIN.

GAL. (*at the door of the room*). Stay, stop, sir, if you please.

MARQ. Do you not know me?

GAL. Yes, I know you, but you shan't go in.

MARQ. Ah! what a fuss you are making, you little flunkey.

GAL. It isn't right to force yourself where you're not wanted.

MARQ. I wish to see your mistress.

GAL. She is not at home, I tell you.

MARQ. Why, there she is in her room!

GAL. It's true she's there, but she is not at home for all that.

URAN. What is the matter?

MARQ. It is your page, madam, who is playing the fool.

GAL. I tell him you are not at home, madam, and he will insist upon coming in all the same.

URAN. And why did you tell this gentleman that I was not at home?

GAL. You scolded me the other day for telling him that you were at home.

URAN. The insolent little fellow! I beg of you not to believe what he says. He is very stupid, and takes you for somebody else.

MARQ. I could see that he did, madam, and, but for the deference I owe you, I would have taught him how to recognise a lord when he sees one.

ELIS. My cousin is much obliged to you for this mark of respect.

URAN. A chair here, impertinence!

GAL. There's one.

URAN. Bring it nearer.

(GALOPIN pushes the chair rudely and goes out.)

SCENE V.—THE MARQUIS, CLIMÈNE, URANIE, ÉLISE.

MARQ. Your little page, madam, holds my person in contempt.

ELIS. He would certainly be much to blame if he did.

MARQ. I must pay interest, no doubt, for my ill looks *(laughs affectedly)*.

ELIS. When he is older he will be better able to tell a true gentleman.

MARQ. What were you speaking of, ladies, when I interrupted you?

URAN. Of the comedy 'The School for Wives.'

MARQ. I have only just come from it.

CLIM. Well, sir, let us know what you think of it.

MARQ. Altogether silly.

CLIM. Oh! how glad I am to hear you say so.

MARQ. It is the most detestable play in the world. The deuce! why, I could hardly get a seat; I thought I should have been stifled at the door, and never was I so trampled upon in my life. Just look, pray, at the condition my canions and ribbons are in.

ELIS. Very true. 'The School for Wives' deserves punishment for that, and you are right in condemning it.

MARQ. I do not think there ever was a more wretched play.

URAN. Ah! here comes Dorante, whom we were expecting.

SCENE VI.—DORANTE, CLIMÈNE, ÉLISE, URANIE,
THE MARQUIS.

DOR. Pray do not let me disturb you. You are occupied, I see, with the subject which for the last four days has been the talk of all Paris, and never was anything so amusing as the variety of criticisms which are passed upon it. I have heard some people condemn this comedy for the very things which made others praise it.

URAN. The Marquis here speaks very ill of it.

MARQ. Yes indeed, I think it detestable by Jove! detestable to the last degree, what we may call detestable, you know.

DOR. And I, my dear Marquis, think the opinion detestable.

MARQ. What, Chevalier, do you intend to stand up for that play?

DOR. Yes, I intend to stand up for it.

MARQ. By Jove? I guarantee it to be detestable?

DOR. The security is not sufficient. But, Marquis, tell

me for what, reason, pray, is this comedy what you say it is?

MARQ. Why it's detestable?

DOR. Yes, why?

MARQ. It is detestable because it is detestable.

DOR. There is nothing to say after that, the verdict is passed. But still, for our instruction, tell us here what are its defects.

MARQ. How can I? I did not even take the trouble of listening to it. But, in fact, I never saw anything so worthless, as I hope to be saved. Dorilas, who sat by the side of me, is of my opinion.

DOR. A good authority, truly. You are well supported.

MARQ. It is enough for me to see the constant bursts of laughter from the pit; I want nothing else to prove it good for nothing.

DOR. Are you then, Marquis, one of those fine gentlemen who refuse all common sense to the pit, and who would be vexed to have laughed with it although it were at the best thing in the world? I saw the other day upon the stage one of your friends who made himself most ridiculous in that way. He heard the piece from beginning to end with the most solemn gravity, and whatever amused others made him frown. At every burst of laughter he shrugged his shoulders and glanced with pity at the pit.* Sometimes even looking down on it with vexation, he cried out aloud, "Laugh away, pit, laugh away." His annoyance was a comedy in itself, he played it like a good fellow, gratis, before the whole assembly, and every one agreed that he could not have done it better. Remember, I beg of you, my dear Marquis, you and others, that in a theatre there is no place set apart for common sense, that the difference between half a louis and fifteen sous does not make the difference between good and bad taste; and that, whether standing or sitting it is possible to pass a wrong judgment. In short, generally speaking, I should rather trust the approbation of the pit, for among those who are there, many are capable of judging of a piece accord-

* See 'Les Fâcheux,' Act i. Sc. i. p. 285.

ing to rule, whilst the remainder judge of it in the only right way, which is to take things as they are meant, without blind prejudices, affected complaisance, or overstrained delicacy.

MARQ. So, Chevalier, you are a champion for the pit. That's capital, by Jove, and I shall take good care to let them know that you are one of their friends, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

DOR. Laugh as much as you please, I stand up for common sense, and have no patience with our Marquises de Mascarille* and their brains in a constant state of effervescence. I hate to see people making fools of themselves, in spite of their rank; passing decisive sentences and speaking positively about everything without knowing a word of the matter; shouting applause at the worst passages in a comedy, and remaining unmoved at the best. These are the fools who, before a picture or at a concert, blame and praise at random, who pick up where they can a few art phrases, and never fail to mutilate them or apply them in season and out of season. S'death, gentlemen, hold your tongues; and since Heaven has not blessed you with the knowledge of certain things, do not give those who hear you cause for laughter, but remember that by saying nothing you may perhaps be taken for wise men!

MARQ. Heyday, Chevalier, your tone

DOR. I am not speaking to you, Marquis, but to a dozen or so of gentlemen who bring contempt upon courtiers by their extravagant manners, and make people believe that we are all alike. For my part, I will, to the utmost of my power, try to show my innocence of it all, and will run them down so, whenever I have the opportunity, that perhaps at last they will become wiser.

MARQ. Pray, tell me, Chevalier, do you think that Lysandre is clever?

DOR. Yes, certainly; and even very clever.

URAN. There is no denying it.

MARQ. Ask him what he thinks of 'The School for Wives;' he will tell you that he does not like it.

* See 'Les Précieuses Ridicules.'

DOR. Well, and what then? There are many people who are spoilt by too much cleverness, who are blinded by an excess of light; nay, who would be very sorry to be of the opinion of other people, as it would deprive them of the glory of sitting in judgment.

URAN. It is quite true; and our friend is undeniably one of those people. He always wants to be the first in his way of thinking, and to see others wait respectfully for his decision. Any approbation which precedes him, is an attack made upon his talents, and he avenges himself openly by taking the opposite side. He wants to be consulted upon all intellectual matters, and I feel quite sure that if the author had shown him his comedy before he gave it to the public, he would have thought that nothing could be finer.

MARQ. And what will you say of the Marchioness Araminte, who everywhere declares it dreadful, and who says she has never been able to bear the impurities with which it is filled?

DOR. I think that what she says corresponds well to the new character she has assumed, and that there are people who make themselves ridiculous by affecting too much modesty. She is a woman of ability and taste, no doubt, but she has followed the bad example of those women, who being no longer young, try to replace by some means or other what they are conscious of losing, and think that the grimaces of a squeamish prudery will serve them instead of youth and beauty. The lady you name carries things farther than any one, and her ingenious scruples discover impurity where no one ever saw any before. It is said that her scruples even go so far as to disfigure our language,* and that there are hardly any words from which she, in her severity, would not cut off either the head or tail, because, forsooth, she thinks those syllables immodest.

URAN. How absurd you are, Chevalier!

MARQ. The fact is that you try to defend your comedy by satirising those who condemn it.

* An attack against the *Précieuses*, repeated in 'La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas,' and again in 'Les Femmes Savantes,' Act iii. Sc. ii.

DOR. Not at all. All I say is, that this lady is offended without a cause

ELIS. Gently, Chevalier, she may not be the only one; perhaps there are others of her way of thinking.

DOR. At least, I know that you are not one, for when you saw this play

ELIS. It is true; but I have changed my opinion; this lady (*showing* CLIMÈNE) has supported hers with such convincing arguments that she has quite won me over.

DOR. Ah! Madam, I beg to apologize to you, and if you wish it, I will, for your sake, unsay all I have said.

CLIM. I would not have you do it for my sake, but for the sake of reason. That play, to say the truth, is altogether indefensible, and I cannot imagine

URAN. Ah! here is Mr. Lysidas the author. He comes just in time to take part in the discussion. Mr. Lysidas, take a chair, please, and sit down here.

SCENE VII.—LYSIDAS, CLIMÈNE, URANIE, ÉLISE, THE
MARQUIS, DORANTE.

LYS. Madam, I come rather late, but I had to read my piece at the house of the Marchioness I spoke to you of, and the praises bestowed on it kept me an hour longer than I expected.

ELIS. Praise is a powerful charm to detain an author.

URAN. Sit down, Mr. Lysidas, we will read your play after supper.

LYS. All who were there are coming for the first representation, and have promised to do their duty properly.*

URAN. I believe it. But once more, sit down please. We were speaking just now on a matter which I should be glad to go on with.

LYS. I hope, madam, that you will also take a box for that day.

URAN. We shall see. But please let us proceed with our conversation.

* See 'Les Précieuses Ridicules,' Sc. x., p. 168.

LYS. I give you warning, madam, that they are nearly all taken.

URAN. I am glad to hear it. In fact, I was in great need of you when you came, for every one here is against me.

ELIS. (to URANIE). At first the Chevalier was on your side, but now (*pointing to CLIMÈNE*) that he knows this lady is at the head of the opposite party, I think you can do nothing better than to look for help elsewhere.

CLIM. No, no. I would not have him neglect his duty towards his cousin; let his mind and heart be on the same side.

DOR. Since I have your kind leave, I will make bold to defend myself.

URAN. But first of all let us hear the opinion of Mr. Lysidas.

LYS. On what, madam?

URAN. On 'The School for Wives.'

LYS. Ah!

DOR. What do you think of it?

LYS. I have nothing to say. You know that authors ought to speak of one another's works with great circumspection.*

DOR. Still, between ourselves, tell us your opinion.

LYS. What I think?

URAN. Yes, tell us your opinion frankly.

LYS. I think it very fine.

DOR. Really?

LYS. Really. Why not? Is it not, in fact, the finest in the world?

DOR. H'm, h'm, you are a sly dog, Mr. Lysidas; you do not tell us what you think.

LYS. Yes, indeed.

DOR. I know you, Mr. Lysidas; let us have no dissimulation.

* An allusion to Boursault, a poet without talent, who had accused Molière of having published a key to 'L'École des Femmes.' Molière was highly indignant at being thought capable of such baseness. The King ordered him to answer the attack, which he did in 'L'Impromptu.' There he actually gave the name of Boursault in full, Sc. iii. p. 410.

LYS. I, sir?

DOR. I see plainly that the praise you bestow upon that piece is only given out of courtesy, and that at the bottom of your heart you are of the opinion of many others, and think it worthless.

LYS. Eh! eh!

DOR. Acknowledge frankly that you think it wretched.

LYS. It is true that connoisseurs do not admire it.

MARQ. You are caught, Chevalier, and are paid for your rillery. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

DOR. Laugh away, Marquis, laugh away.

MARQ. You see that the learned are on our side.

DOR. It is true that the opinion of Mr. Lysidas has great weight. But he will allow me not to give up because of it; and, since I am bold enough to defend myself against the opinion of this lady (*pointing to CLIMÈNE*) he will not take it ill if I oppose his.

ELIS. What! you see against you the Marquis and Mr. Lysidas, and you still dare to resist? Fie, what manners!

CLIM. For my part, I am perfectly amazed that reasonable people should take upon themselves to defend the stupidity of this piece.

MARQ. Demmit, madam! It is wretched stuff from beginning to end.

DOR. That is soon said, Marquis. It is the easiest thing in the world to cut the matter short in that fashion, and nothing is safe from the sovereignty of your decisions.

MARQ. Zounds! Why all the other actors who saw it said every possible harm of it.

DOR. Ah! I have not a word more to say, Marquis, since the other actors speak ill of it. Of course we must believe them, they are enlightened people, and have no interest whatever in the matter. Nothing more can be said after this. I yield.

CLIM. Yield or not, all I know is, that you will never persuade me to tolerate the immodesty of the play, any more than its unmannerly satires against women.

URAN. Well, as far as I am concerned, I should be very sorry to be offended, and to take to myself anything that is

found in it. This kind of satire falls directly upon the manners of the day, and only touches us indirectly. Why should we apply to ourselves the odium of a general censure? Let us rather profit by the lesson if we can, without seeming to understand that it is aimed at us. We all should look at these ludicrous sketches without annoyance. They are public mirrors, in which we should never allow that we can see ourselves. To be offended, is openly to tax ourselves with the fault reproved.

CLIM. As for me, I do not speak of these things because of the share I may have in them. I think my life is such, that I need not dread to see myself recognised among the portraits that are given of women who are not what they should be.

ELIS. Undoubtedly, madam. No one would ever look for you there. Your conduct is sufficiently well known, and it is one of those things that nobody would think of calling in question.

URAN. (*to CLIMÈNE*). Neither did I say anything that can apply to you; my words, like the satire of the comedy, are mere generalities.

CLIM. I am sure of it. But suppose we drop this part of the subject. Will you tell me how you can explain the insults given to our sex in a certain part of the play? I must say that I feel highly offended with that insolent author who dares to call us *animals*.*

URAN. Did you not notice that it is put in the mouth of a ridiculous personage?

DOR. And besides, madam, do you not know that the reproaches lovers make to each other never offend? that if some are gentle and meek, others are impassioned and hasty, and that on such occasions the strangest words, and at times something beyond words, are taken as proofs of affection.

ELIS. Say all you please, but I could not digest that, any more than the *soup* and *cream tart*, which Climène mentioned just before you came.

MARQ. Oh, yes, true, *cream tart*! I had noticed it. *Cream tart*! How much I am obliged to you for reminding

* 'School for Wives,' Act. iii. Sc. iii.

me of *cream tart*. Are there enough apples in Normandy* for *cream tart*? *Cream tart!* by Jove! *cream tart!*

DOR. Well, what do you mean with your *cream tart*?

MARQ. *Cream tart*. Chevalier, *cream tart*, egad!

DOR. But what?

MARQ. *Cream tart*.

URAN. Your reasons, give us your reasons.

MARQ. *Cream tart*, madam.

URAN. What do you find wrong in it?

MARQ. I! Nothing. *Cream tart*.

URAN. Oh! I give it up.

ELIS. The Marquis goes the right way to work, and gives it you handsomely. But I wish Mr. Lysidas would finish them off, and supply them with some of his arguments.

LYS. I am not in the habit of blaming anything; and am indulgent enough with the works of others. But, without offending the friendship the Chevalier shows for the author, one must acknowledge that such comedies are not true comedies, and that there exists a vast difference between these trifles and the beauty of serious pieces. Yet everybody runs after them nowadays; and although there is a frightful solitude where great works are performed, the whole of Paris flocks to see these follies. I assure you that my heart bleeds to see it; it is a disgrace to France.

CLIM. It is true that the public taste is sadly corrupted, and that the age is getting more and more plebeianized.†

ELIS. This word, plebeianized, is exquisite! Did you invent it, madam?

CLIM. Eh!

ELIS. I thought so.

DOR. Then you think, Mr. Lysidas, that cleverness and beauty are to be found in serious poems only, and that comic pieces are trash, undeserving of praise?

URAN. That is not my opinion. Good tragedy is no

* Normandy, where apples grow plentifully. An allusion to the habit of throwing apples at bad actors, or when any part of a play displeased the public.

† *Scencanailles*=to keep low company. Another word introduced by the *Précieuses*. *Canaille*=rabble, mob, &c.

doubt very beautiful ; but comedy has also its charms, and I believe that the one is as difficult as the other.

DOR. You are quite right ; and as far as difficulty goes, if you were to place it a little more on the side of comedy, perhaps you would do well. For, in short, I think that it is much easier to launch out about noble sentiments, to brave fortune in verse, to accuse destiny and reproach the gods, than to enter, as one must do, into the absurdities of men, and to show on the stage after a pleasing fashion the defects of all mankind. When you paint heroes you can do as you like ; the portraits are fancy portraits, in which no one looks for a resemblance, you have only to let your imagination run riot, and too often to leave truth aside to reach the marvellous. But when you paint men, you must paint after nature ; the portraits must be likenesses, and you have not succeeded if people do not recognise in them the men of the age. To escape censure in serious pieces, it is sufficient to have good sense and rounded periods ; but this is not enough in the others you must in addition have humour ; and it is a difficult task to make gentlefolk laugh.

CLIM. I imagine that I may reckon myself among the gentlefolk, and yet I have been unable to find one word in that comedy to make me smile.

MARQ. Nor I neither, by Jove !

DOR. As for you, Marquis, I do not wonder at it ; you found no puns in it.

LYS. Indeed, sir, what one finds there is little better, and, to my mind, all the jokes are very insipid.

DOR. The Court did not think so.

LYS. Ah ! sir ! the Court . . . !

DOR. Speak out, Mr. Lysidas. I see that you were about to say that the Court is no judge in such matters. For it is the usual refuge of you authors, when your works have had no success, to accuse the injustice of the age, and the absence of discernment at Court. Let me tell you, Mr. Lysidas, that courtiers have as good eyes as other people ; that one can be as clever in Venice point-lace and feathers as in a short wig and little plain bands ; that in the judgment of the Court we find the great test of all your comedies, and that the secret of success lies in study-

ing its tastes. I will not quote the names of all the scholars who are to be found there, but there is no place where criticism is more just; for, from natural good sense and constant contact with people of education, in it is created a kind of cleverness which, without comparison, judges better of things than all the worm-eaten book-learning of pedants.

URAN. And it is quite certain, however little we frequent it, so many things pass daily before our eyes, that we acquire, as it were, the habit of understanding them; above all, we discover the difference between real and false wit.

DOR. I acknowledge that the Court has here and there its ridiculous people, and I am the first to wage war against them. But, upon my word, there are not a few as ridiculous among those who are clever by profession; and if the marquis is brought on the stage, there are good reasons why the author should be brought there too. It would methinks be a good joke to see them reproduced there with their learned grimaces and absurd subtleties; their vicious habit of pestering people to death with their works; their relish for praise; their economy of thought; their trade in reputation; their offensive and defensive cliques, and their skirmishes and battles in prose and verse.

LYS. Molière is very fortunate, sir, in having so earnest a patron. However, to return to the question in hand, whether the piece is good or not, I engage to show a hundred glaring faults in it.

URAN. It is a strange thing in you poets, that you always condemn the plays which everybody runs after, and only speak well of those that no one goes to see. You show for the first an irreconcilable hatred, for the others an inconceivable tenderness.

DOR. That is because it is generous to take the part of the distressed.

URAN. But pray, Mr. Lysidas, show us those defects which I have failed to see.

LYS. Those who have studied Aristotle and Horace, see at once, madam, that this comedy sins against all the rules of art.

URAN. I confess that I have no acquaintance with

those gentlemen, nor do I understand the "rules of art."

DOR. You are nice people with your "rules of art," with which you puzzle the ignorant and hourly deafen us. One would think, to hear you talk, that those rules of art were the greatest mysteries in the world; and yet they are only a few simple remarks, which good sense has made upon what may lessen the pleasure one derives from such poems. The same good sense which once dictated them, easily renews them at any time without the help of Horace or Aristotle. I should like to know, whether the greatest rule of all rules is not to please, and whether a piece which has gained that end has not followed the right road. Would you persuade me that the entire public is deceived in these matters, and will you deny to each man the power of judging of the pleasure he himself feels?

URAN. I have remarked one thing in these gentlemen; it is always those who speak most of rules and who seem to know them best, who write plays which nobody cares for.

DOR. And this shows, madam, what little weight we ought to give to their perplexing disputes. For, in short, if the pieces which are written according to rule do not please, and if, on the other hand, those which please are not according to rule, it follows of necessity that the rules are wrong. Let us therefore despise all the chicanery by which they would shackle the public taste, and be only guided by the effect the comedy has upon us. Let us yield ourselves heartily to whatever moves us deeply, and not search for reasons to mar our pleasure.

URAN. For my part, when I see a play, my only thought is the interest it creates; when I have been much amused with it, I do not inquire afterwards whether I have been wrong, and whether, according to the rules of Aristotle, I ought not to have laughed.

DOR. It is just like a man who having found a sauce to his taste, wishes to discover whether it is good according to the rules of the cookery-book.

URAN. Exactly so, and I wonder at the petty subtleties of certain people about things that we ought and can feel for ourselves.

DOR. You are right, madam, to wonder at all those subtle mystifications. For after all, if they are real, we are reduced to believe in ourselves no longer. In everything our own senses will be enslaved, and even in eating and drinking we shall never have to find anything good without the permission of an expert.

LYS. In short, sir, your argument is this: 'The School for Wives' has pleased you, and you do not care whether it be according to rule or not, provided that . . .

DOR. Gently, Mr. Lysidas, I do not grant you that. I certainly say that the art of pleasing is the greatest art of all; and that as this comedy has pleased those for whom it was written, I think it sufficient, and that we need not care for anything else. But, at the same time, I maintain that it is not contrary to any of the rules you speak of. I have read them, thank goodness, as well as other men, and I can easily prove that on the stage we have not, perhaps, a more regular piece than this.

ELIS. Courage, Mr. Lysidas, we are lost if you give way.

LYS. What, sir! we have the protasis, the epitasis, and the peripeteia . . .

DOR. Oh! Mr. Lysidas, you crush us with your big words. Do not show yourself so learned, I beg of you. Humanize your speech, and talk so as to be understood. Do you fancy that a Greek word gives more weight to your arguments? and do you not think that it would look just as well to say: *the exposition of the subject, as the protasis; the main action, as the epitasis; and the catastrophe, as the peripeteia?*

LYS. They are terms of art which it is allowable to use. But, since they offend your ears, I will express myself in another manner, and will beg of you to answer plainly two or three questions I will ask you. Can one endure a play which sins against the very name given to theatrical pieces? For, in short, the name of dramatic poem comes from a Greek word which means *to act*, in order to show that the nature of that kind of poem consists in action. Now in this comedy there is no action; the whole consists of narrations made by Agnes or by Horace.

MARQ. Ha! ha! Chevalier.

CLIM. A clever remark, and one which touches the gist of the question.

LYS. Is there anything less witty, or, to speak more correctly, anything more low, than some expressions at which everybody laughs, and especially that of *children by the ear*?

CLIM. Good.

ELIS. Ah!

LYS. Is not the scene of the two servants within doors of a most tedious length and altogether silly?

MARQ. It is quite true.

CLIM. Certainly.

ELIS. He is right.

LYS. Does not Arnolphe give his money too freely to Horace? Since he is the ridiculous personage of the play, why make him act like a gentleman?

MARQ. Right; a very good remark.

CLIM. Admirable!

ELIS. Excellent!

LYS. Are not the sermon and the maxims absurd, and do they not outrage the reverence we owe to religion?

MARQ. Well said!

CLIM. Rightly spoken!

ELIS. Nothing can be better!

LYS. And in short, that Mr. de la Souche, who is represented as a person of sense, and who seems so serious in many passages, does he not descend to something too comical and too far-fetched in the fifth Act, when he explains to Agnes the violence of his love with that extravagant rolling of his eyes, those ridiculous sighs, and those silly tears which make everybody laugh?

MARQ. Capital, by Jove!

CLIM. Marvellous!

ELIS. Bravo! Mr. Lysidas!

LYS. I pass over a hundred thousand other things for fear of being tedious.

MARQ. By Jove, Chevalier, you have caught it.

DOR. We must see.

MARQ. You have met with your match.

DOR. Perhaps.

MARQ. Answer, answer, answer, answer.

DOR. Willingly. He

MARQ. Come, come, answer.

DOR. Let me do so. If

MARQ. By Jove! I defy you to answer.

DOR. Of course, if you keep on interrupting me.

CLIM. Pray, let us hear what he has to say.

DOR. First of all, is it true to say that the play is all narration? There is a good deal of action on the stage; and according to the arrangement of the subject the narrations themselves are all action,—since they are innocently repeated to the person concerned, who by this means is thrown at every turn into a confusion which amuses the spectators,—and at every fresh piece of information he takes all the measures in his power to ward off the misfortune he dreads.

URAN. For my part, I think that the beauty of the subject of 'The School for Wives' consists in this perpetual confidence; and what I find most amusing is, that a man of sense, who is warned of everything by an innocent creature with whom he is in love, and by a blunderer who is his rival, cannot, notwithstanding all this, avoid what befalls him.

MARQ. Nonsense! nonsense!

CLIM. Weak answer.

ELIS. Wretched reasons.

DOR. As to *children by the ear*, it has no jest in it but as regards Arnolphe, and the author did not intend it as a witticism in itself, but only as a thing which characterises the man, and describes his folly so much the more, that he repeats a trivial foolish thing, that Agnes had said, as the finest thing in the world, and experiences from it an immoderate satisfaction.

MARQ. Worthless answer.

CLIM. Does not satisfy.

ELIS. It means nothing at all.

DOR. As to the money he gives so freely, not only is the letter of the best of his friends a sufficient security to him, but a person may be ridiculous in certain things, and commendable in others; the two things are not incompatible. As for the scene of Alain and Georgette in the house, which certain people have thought too long and dull, it is

certain that it is not there without reason; for as Arnolphe is victimized during his absence through the simple innocence of Agnes, in the same way he has on his return to stop a long time outside his door through the innocence of his servants, so that he may be punished by the very things which he thought would be his greatest security.

MARQ. Your reasons are good for nothing.

CLIM. All that is beside the mark.

ELIS. It is pitiful.

DOR. As for the moral discourse, which you call a sermon, it is certain that some truly religious people who have heard it, have not found it what you say. There is no doubt that those expressions of *hell* and *boiling caldrons* are sufficiently justified by the extravagance of Arnolphe, and the innocence of her to whom he speaks. As to the declaration of love of the fifth Act, which is said to be too far-fetched and too comical, I should like to know if it is not a satire upon all lovers, and if even the most sensible and serious people do not on such occasions do things . . .

MARQ. Upon my word, Chevalier, you had better hold your tongue.

DOR. I will, if you wish it. All the same, if we could see ourselves, when we are very much in love . . .

MARQ. I will not even listen to you.

DOR. Do as you like. Do you think that in the violence of the passion . . .

MARQ. (*sings*). La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

DOR. What . . .

MARQ. La, la, la, la, la, la, la.

DOR. I do not know if . . .

MARQ. La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

URAN. It seems to me . . .

MARQ. La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

URAN. We have had amusing things enough during our discussion. I think we could make a nice little comedy out of it; it would not look at all bad at the end of 'The School for Wives.'

DOR. You are quite right.

MARQ. You would play no brilliant part in it, by Jove!

DOR. True, Marquis.

CLIM. For my part, I should like to see it done, if

only things could be represented exactly as they took place.

ELIS. And I would lend my part with all my heart.

LYS. I should not refuse mine, I think.

URAN. Since it would please everybody, make a memorandum of it all, and give it to Molière, who is one of your friends, so that he may make a comedy of it.

CLIM. He would no doubt take good care to do nothing of the kind; it would not redound to his honour.

URAN. No, no; I understand him, he cares nothing about people finding fault with his pieces, so long as they all go to see them.

DOR. Yes; but what end could we find for this comedy? For we have neither marriage nor catastrophe, and I do not see how we can end the discussion.

URAN. We must try and imagine some incident for that purpose.

SCENE VIII.—CLIMÈNE, URANIE, ÉLISE, DORANTE, THE MARQUIS, LYSIDAS, GALOPIN.

GAL. Supper is on the table, ladies.

DOR. Ah! that is exactly what we wanted for a winding up of the whole business, and we could find nothing more natural. They shall therefore dispute hard on both sides, as we have done, without anyone giving way; a little lackey shall come and say that supper is ready, they will rise, and everybody will go in to supper.

URAN. The comedy cannot end in a better way, and we shall do well to stop there.

THE IMPROMPTU OF VERSAILLES.

(L'IMPROMPTU DE VERSAILLES.)

'L'Impromptu de Versailles,' planned, written, and acted in a week, was the answer of Molière to the criticisms of his enemies, rendered more fierce by his 'Critique de l'École des Femmes.' Louis XIV. seems to have told Molière to revenge himself for their attacks, and to have placed the Court Theatre at his disposal expressly for that purpose. Molière no doubt did not attach much importance to this brilliant little play, for it was only printed after his death.

It was acted on the 14th of October, 1663. The actors wore their usual dress, and appeared in their own characters.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

MOLIÈRE, a ridiculous marquis.

DE LA GRANGE, a ridiculous marquis.

LA THORILLIÈRE, a marquis and a bore.

DU CROISY, a poet.

BRÉCOURT, a man of rank.

BÉJART, attendant on the King.

Four other Attendants.

MADemoisELLE * DU PARC, affected marchioness.†

„ BÉJART, prude.

„ DE BRIE, demure coquette.

„ MOLIÈRE, satirical wit.

„ DU CROISY, hypocritical backbiter.

„ HERVÉ, servant to the précieuse.

Scene: Theatre in the Palace at Versailles.

* The title of "Madame" was only used at that time for ladies of noble birth; that of "Mademoiselle" for ladies, even when married, of a lower rank in life.

† These characters are described in greater detail at p. 402.

THE IMPROMPTU OF VERSAILLES.

SCENE I.—MM. MOLIERE, BRÉCOURT, LA GRANGE, DU CROISY,
MESDEMOISELLES DU PARC, BÉJART, DE BRIE, MOLIERE,
DU CROISY, HERVÉ.

MOL. (*alone, speaking to his fellow-actors who are behind the scenes*). Now, ladies and gentlemen; what do you mean by being so long? Are you coming, or are you not?—Plague take them all! Ho! I say, M. de Brécourt!

BRÉ. (*behind the scenes*). Yes.

MOL. M. de la Grange!

LA GRAN. (*behind the scenes*). What is it?

MOL. M. du Croisy!

DU CRO. (*behind the scenes*). What do you say?

MOL. Mademoiselle du Parc!

MAD. DU PAR. (*behind the scenes*). Well?

MOL. Mademoiselle Béjart!

MAD. BÉJ. (*behind the scenes*). What is the matter?

MOL. Mademoiselle de Brie!

MAD. DE BRIE (*behind the scenes*). What do you want?

MOL. Mademoiselle du Croisy!

MAD. DU CRO. (*behind the scenes*). What is going on now?

MOL. Mademoiselle Hervé?

MAD. HER. (*behind the scenes*). Coming, coming.

MOL. I think they are determined to drive me crazy!
(*enter BRÉCOURT, LA GRANGE, DU CROISY.*) Hang it all, gentlemen! do you mean to make me lose my senses to-day?

BRÉ. We shall lose ours rather than you, for we don't know our parts; and you persist in asking us to play.

MOL. Ah! these actors, what awkward animals to drive!

Enter MESDEMOISELLES BÉJART, DU PARC, DE BRIE, MOLIERE, DU CROISY, and HERVÉ.

MAD. BÉJ. Well! here we are. What do you mean to do?

MAD. DU PAR. What have you got in your head?

MAD. DE BRIE. What is to be done?

MOL. Take your places, all of you, I beg, since everybody is dressed and ready. The King will not come for a couple of hours, let us therefore make use of the time to rehearse and see how each of us is to act his part.

LA GRAN. But how is any one to play what he doesn't know?

MAD. DU PAR. As for myself, I declare that I don't remember one single word of my part.

MAD. DE BRIE. I am sure that I shall have to be prompted from beginning to end.

MAD. BÉJ. As for me, I shall hold my part in my hand.

MAD. MOL. So shall I.

MAD. HERV. Fortunately for me, I have not much to say.

MAD. DU CRO. Nor I, but all the same I won't answer for it that I shan't break down.

DU CRO. I'd give ten pistoles to be rid of it.

BRÉ. And I'd willingly receive twenty lashes to have nothing to do with it.

MOL. If you think yourselves so badly off with the paltry parts you have to repeat, what would you do if you were in my place?

MAD. BÉJ. You? You have not much to complain of, for as you have written the piece, you are pretty sure to remember it.

MOL. And is a slip of memory all I have to fear? Do you call it nothing for the whole success of the play to rest upon me? Do you think it an easy thing to bring out something comical before such an assembly as this; to undertake to amuse people one must perforce respect, and who only laugh when they choose? What author would not

tremble when put to such a test? And would it not be rather my place to say, that I would give anything in the world to be rid of it?

MAD. BÉJ. If it made you tremble, you would be more careful, and not undertake to have a play ready in a week, as you have done.

MOL. How could I help it when a king had ordered it?

MAD. BÉJ. How you could help it? You could have given him a respectful excuse, founded upon the impossibility of doing such a thing in so short a time. Any one else, in your place, would have been more careful of his reputation, and would have taken good care not to have risked it as you have done. What will you do, tell me, if your play does not succeed; and will not your enemies take advantage of the failure, think you?

MAD. DE BRIE. That is true, you had only to excuse yourself respectfully to the king, and ask for a little more time.

MOL. Nonsense, there is nothing kings like so much as ready obedience, and they will not hear of obstacles. They will have things ready when they want them, and to put off their amusement is to destroy all the charm of it. They want pleasures without the trouble of waiting for them, and the most welcome are those that are most quickly ready. We must not consider ourselves when they want anything from us—our business is to please them; and when they command us, we should be only too glad to respond quickly to their wishes. Better not succeed in what is required of us, than not do it at the proper time; and if we have the shame of having been unsuccessful, at least we have the merit of having at once obeyed their commands. But let us think of our rehearsal, if you please.

MAD. BÉJ. What can you expect of us, when we don't know our parts?

MOL. You will know them, I tell you; and even if you do not know them perfectly, can you not draw on your own imagination, since it is in prose, and you know your subject?

MAD. BÉJ. Thank you! Prose is even worse than verse.

MAD. MOL. I know what you ought to have done. You

should have written a comedy where you would have acted all alone.

MOL. Hold your tongue, my wife, you talk foolishly.

MAD. MOL. Many thanks, my husband. That's always the way marriage changes people; you wouldn't have said such a thing to me eighteen months ago!*

MOL. I beg of you to be silent.

MAD. MOL. It is a strange thing that so short a ceremony should deprive us of all our charms, and that a husband and a lover have such different eyes for the same person.

MOL. What a flow of words!

MAD. MOL. All I can say is, that if I were to write a comedy, I should take that for the subject. I would justify the women, and show how unfairly they are accused of many things. Husbands should dread the contrast between their rough manners and the smooth civility of a lover.

MOL. Do be quiet. We don't want to talk now, we have something else to do.

MAD. BÉJ. But since you were ordered† to take for a subject the criticisms that have been made upon you, why have you not made that *Comedy of the Comedians* of which you told us some time ago? There you had your subject ready made, and it would have come in capitally. Considering that they attempted to draw your portrait,‡ it was but right you should seize the opportunity of doing the same to them. It might have been called their portrait much more justly than what they have done can be called yours; for to mimic an actor in a comic part is not to describe him himself, it is only to describe after him the characters he represents, and to use the same touches and the same colours which he is obliged to use in the various ridiculous characters he imitates from nature; but to mimic an actor in a serious part is to describe him by faults which are

* Molière has only been married about eighteen months. He always wrote for his wife parts with sharp retorts and sayings, and often the part of the coquette of the play.

† It is evident that if the King had not ordered Molière to reply to his enemies, he would not have said so twice in this scene and again in the following. See p. 403.

‡ Boursault had written against Molière 'The Painter's Portrait' for the rival company.

entirely his own, since neither the gestures, nor the ridiculous tones of voice by which he may be recognized, form any part of the play.

MOL. That is true, no doubt; but I have my reasons for not doing it. Between ourselves, I did not think that it was worth the trouble, and moreover it would have required more time to work out the idea. As their days for acting are the same as ours,* I have hardly seen them two or three times since we have been in Paris, and all I have caught of their manner of acting is what would strike anyone at first sight, and I should have to study them more closely for the portraits to be much like them.

MAD. DU PAR. Yet I recognised some of those you imitated.

MAD. DE BRIE. I never heard anything of this before.

MOL. It is an idea I had in my head, but I gave it up as a trivial joke which would have amused anybody.

MAD. DE BRIE. You must tell me a little about it, since you have told others.

MOL. We have no time for that now.

MAD. DE BRIE. Only a few words.

MOL. I had thought of a comedy, in which there would have been a poet. I should myself have represented that part. He would have come and offered a piece to a strolling company fresh from the provinces. I should have made him say, "Have you any actors and actresses capable of doing justice to a play, for you see, my play is a play, which?" "Ah! sir," the actors would have answered, "we have ladies and gentlemen who have been approved of wherever we have been." "And who plays the kings among you?" "Here is an actor who sometimes takes the part." "What! that well-made young fellow? You are joking, a king must be very fat, and as large as four people; a king, thoroughly well stuffed out; a king of a vast circumference, and who can fill a throne handsomely.† A fine thing indeed to have a king well shaped! This is

* The comedians of the *Hôtel de Bourgogne* acted like Molière's company, on Tuesdays, Fridays, and Sundays.

† An allusion to Montfleury, who was very stout. Montfleury, to avenge himself, wrote a petition to the King, and accused Molière of

already a very serious defect ; but let him repeat a dozen verses that I may judge." Thereupon the actor should have repeated some of the lines said by the king in 'Nicomède'—

"Well, shall I say, Araspus? All too well

Hath he served me, increasing this my power"

as naturally as he could. And the poet should have exclaimed, "What! do you call that reciting? you are surely laughing at me; things should be said with emphasis. Listen to me" (*he imitates Montfleury, a comedian of the Hôtel de Bourgogne*). "Do you see that attitude? Observe well. There, lay great stress on the last verse. That is what calls forth approbation, and makes people applaud?" "But, sir," would have answered the actor, "it seems to me that a king who is conversing quietly with the captain of his guards, would talk a little more like a human being, and would not take this tone of a madman." "You know nothing about it; recite as you do, and you will see if you get any applause. But let us hear a scene between two lovers." Thereupon an actor and an actress should have played together—say the scene between Camilla and Curiatius—

"Wilt thou away, my soul? this fatal pride
Can please thee, at the cost of all our bliss?"

"Alas! I see too well," &c.†

as naturally as they could, like the other. Then the poet should have exclaimed, "All you do there is absurd; listen to me, and see how you ought to repeat it."

(*Imitating Mademoiselle de Beauchâteau, an actress of the Hôtel de Bourgogne.*)

"Wilt thou away, my soul? this fatal pride
Can please thee at the cost of all our bliss?"

"Alas! I see too well," &c.

"Nay, I know thee better," &c.

having married his own daughter. The King only answered by becoming godfather of Molière's first-born, to whom he gave the name of Louis.

* 'Nicomède,' a tragedy of Corneille, Act ii. Sc. i.

† From 'Horace,' by Corneille, Act ii. Sc. v.

"Do you see how natural and passionate this is? Admire the smiling countenance she maintains in the deepest affliction." This was the idea I had; and the poet would have criticised all the actors and actresses in the same way.

MAD. DE BRIE. I think it was a capital idea; and I recognised some of them by the very first verse; pray go on.

MOL. (*imitating Beauchâteau, a comedian of the Hôtel de Bourgogne in some lines of the 'Cid.'*)

"Pierced to the very heart," &c.*

And do you know this man as Pompey in 'Sertorius' (*imitating Hauteroche, a comedian of the Hôtel de Bourgogne*).

"The enmity which 'twixt the two parties reigns,
Can ne'er exclude the rights of honour," &c.

MAD. DE BRIE. I think I know who that is.

MOL. And this one (*imitating De Villiers, a comedian of the Hôtel de Bourgogne*).

"Polybius is dead, my lord," &c.

MAD. DE BRIE. Yes, I know who that is; but there are a few among them you would find it difficult to mimic.

MOL. Not at all! There isn't one of them that could not be hit off somewhere or other, if I had only studied them well. But you make me lose precious time. Let us think of ourselves and give up all this nonsense, I pray. (*to LA GRANGE*) Mind you are careful how you act your part of the Marquis with me.

MAD. MOL. What! Marquises again!

MOL. Yes, Marquises again. What the deuce would you have me take for an amusing character? The Marquis, nowadays, is the standard joke of the comedy; and as in all the old plays there was always a buffoon who made the audience laugh, so now, in all our pieces, there must be a ridiculous marquis.

MAD. BÉJ. Quite true, we could not do without them.

* 'Le Cid,' by Corneille, Act i. Sc. vii. 'Sertorius,' also by Corneille, Act iii. Sc. i.

MOL. For you

MAD. DU PAR. Oh! I shall play my part wretchedly; and I really don't know what made you give me this affected character.

MOL. There again! just what you said when you were asked to play the part of Climène in 'The School for Wives Criticised,' and yet you did wonders, and everyone agreed that it could not have been better played. Believe me, it will be the same this time, you will play it better than you think.

MAD. DU PAR. How can that be, for nowhere can anyone find a less affected person than I?

MOL. Quite true, but it only shows what an excellent actress you are, since you can so well assume a character opposed to your natural disposition. Endeavour then, each of you, to enter well into the spirit of your part, and imagine that you really are what you represent. (*to DU CROISY*) You play the poet, and ought to realize the character; to affect that pedantic manner which is still maintained in the fashionable world; that sententious tone of voice and precision of pronunciation which, dwelling on every syllable, never misses one single letter of the strictest orthography. (*to BRÉCOURT*) You play a courtier, as you have already done in 'The School for Wives Criticised,' you must therefore assume a calm manner, a natural tone of voice, and gesticulate as little as possible. (*to LA GRANGE*) I have nothing to say to you. (*to MADEMOISELLE BÉJART*) You, you represent one of those women who, because they do not make love, think everything else is allowed them; one of those women who, proudly entrenched behind their prudery, look down with contempt on everyone, and think that the good qualities which shine in others are of no value compared to a paltry honour for which nobody cares. Do not lose sight of the character, and omit none of its grimaces. (*to MADEMOISELLE DE BRIE*) As for you, you play one of those women who think they are the most virtuous persons in the world, as long as they can save appearances; who fancy that all the sin consists in the scandal it occasions; who carry on a love-affair quietly, as if it were an honourable attachment, and call by the name of *friends* those whom others call *lovers*. Keep your part before your

eyes. (*to MADEMOISELLE MOLIERE*) You play the same character as in 'The School for Wives Criticised; '* I have no more to say to you than to Mademoiselle du Parc. (*to MADEMOISELLE DU CROISY*) As for you, you represent one of those persons who are sweetly charitable to everyone, one of those women who give a passing fling with their tongues, and would be very sorry to have allowed one of their neighbours to be well spoken of. I think you will acquit yourself very well in this part. (*to MADEMOISELLE HERVÉ*) And you, you are the maid of the *précieuse*, who is always putting in her word into the conversation, and picks up her mistress's expressions as much as she can. I tell you all your parts, so that you may impress them strongly on your minds. Let us begin to rehearse them, and see how it will do. Ah! now there is a bore coming—we only wanted that!

SCENE II.—*LA THORILLIÈRE, MOLIERE, BRÉCOURT, LA GRANGE, DU CROISY, MESDEMOISELLES DU PARC, BÉJART, DE BRIE, MOLIERE, DU CROISY, HERVÉ.*

LA THOR. Good day, Molière.

MOL. Sir, your servant. (*aside*) Plague take the fellow!

LA THOR. And how are you?

MOL. Quite well, at your service. (*to the actresses*) Ladies, do not

LA THOR. I come from a place where I have praised you highly.

MOL. I am obliged to you. (*aside*) Devil take you! (*to the actors*) Take care that

LA THOR. You are going to play a new piece to-day, are you not?

MOL. Yes, sir. (*to the actresses*) Do not forget

LA THOR. The King asked you to do it, did he not?†

MOL. Yes, sir. (*to the actors*) I beg of you to remember

* Madame Molière acted the part of Eliza in 'The School for Wives Criticised.'

† See note †, p. 398.

LA THOR. What do you call it?

MOL. Yes, sir.

LA THOR. I ask you what you call it?

MOL. Upon my word, I do not know. (*to the actresses*)
You must, please

LA THOR. How shall you be dressed?

MOL. As you see. (*to the actors*) I pray you

LA THOR. When do you begin?

MOL. When the King comes. (*aside*) Deuce take the
inquisitive ass!

LA THOR. When do you think he will come?

MOL. Deuce take me, if I know, sir.

LA THOR. You do not know

MOL. Look you, sir, nobody can be more ignorant than
I. I assure you that I don't know a word about what you
ask me. (*aside*) I shall not be able much longer to stand
the cool cross-examination of this wretched coxcomb. He
doesn't care a bit whether I have anything else to do or not.

LA THOR. Ladies, your most obedient.

MOL. Ah, well! Now he has gone to somebody else.

LA THOR. (*to MADemoiselle du Croisy*) You are as
lovely as an angel. Do you both play to-day? (*looking at*
MADemoiselle Hervé.)

MAD. DU CRO. Yes, sir.

LA THOR. Without you the comedy would not be worth
much.

MOL. (*aside, to the actresses*) Can't you send that man
away?

MAD. DE BRIE (*to LA THORILLIÈRE*). Sir, we have some-
thing to rehearse here together.

LA THOR. 'Gad! I don't want to hinder you; you have
only to go on.

MAD. DE BRIE. But

LA THOR. No, no, I should be very sorry to annoy
anyone. I beg of you to go on with what you have to do
without minding me.

MAD. DE BRIE. Yes, but

LA THOR. I am a man of no ceremony, I tell you, and
you can rehearse whatever you please.

MOL. Sir, these ladies do not like to tell you that they
had rather have nobody here during the rehearsal.

LA THOR. But why? You need not be afraid of me.

MOL. It is their custom, sir. You will be all the better pleased when you see the play, for it will be new to you.

LA THOR. Then I will go and say that you are ready.

MOL. Indeed, we are not, sir. I beg of you not to hurry.

SCENE III.—MOLIÈRE, BRÉCOURT, LA GRANGE, DU CROISY, MESDEMOISELLES DU PARC, BÉJART, DE BRIE, MOLIÈRE, DU CROISY, HERVÉ.

MOL. Ah! How full of impertinent fools the world is! But now, come, let us begin. First, then, imagine that the scene is in the King's antechamber: for it is a place where many amusing things happen every day. It is easy to introduce there all the persons we like, and we may even find reasons to justify the presence of the ladies I bring in. The play begins with the meeting of two marquises. (*to LA GRANGE*) Now, remember to come in as I told you, with what is called the fashionable air, combing your wig,* and humming a little tune between your teeth, la, la, la, la, la, la. Get out of their way all of you, for two marquises must have plenty of room, they are not people to be satisfied with a small space. (*to LA GRANGE*) Now speak.

LA GRAN. "Good day, Marquis."

MOL. Pooh, pooh, this is not the way a marquis talks. You must pitch your voice in a higher key; most of these gentlemen affect a particular manner of speaking to distinguish them from ordinary people. "Good day, Marquis." Begin again.

LA GRAN. "Good day, Marquis."

MOL. "Ah! Marquis, your most obedient."

LA GRAN. "What are you doing there?"

MOL. "'Sdeath! you see. I am waiting for all those people to clear the door, that I may show my face inside."

LA GRAN. "By Jove, what a crowd! I shall take good care not to try and force my way through, I had rather be one of the last to go in."

MOL. "There are a score of people there who have not

* See Note †, p. 163.

the least chance of getting in, and yet they cluster together and crowd all the approaches."

LA GRAN. "Let us give both our names to the usher, that he may call us in."

MOL. "You may do as you please, but I have no wish to be played off by Molière."

LA GRAN. "And yet, Marquis, I think it is you he played off in 'The School for Wives Criticised.'"

MOL. "I? Many thanks, it is you yourself."

LA GRAN. "Ah! upon my word, you . . ."

MOL. "Zounds, I think you rather cool to give me the character that belongs to you."

LA GRAN. (*laughing*), "Ah, ah, ah! how amusing!"

MOL. (*laughing*). "Ah, ah, ah! how absurd!"

LA GRAN. "What! Will you maintain that it is not you that is meant in the character of the Marquis in 'The School for Wives Criticised?'"

MOL. "Of course it is I. It's no use your turning it off by a joke—*Detestable, egad! detestable! Cream tart!** It is I, it is I! of course it is I!"

LA GRAN. "Yes, by Jove! it is you; you need not jest; and if you like, we will lay a wager and see which of us is right."

MOL. "What will you bet, then?"

LA GRAN. "I bet a hundred pistoles that it is you."

MOL. "And I, a hundred pistoles that it is you."

LA GRAN. "Money down."

MOL. "Money down. Ninety on Amyntas, and ten cash."

LA GRAN. "Done."

MOL. "Done."

LA GRAN. "Your money runs a great risk."

MOL. "Yours is in great danger."

LA GRAN. "Who shall be umpire?"

MOL. (*to BRÉCOURT*) "Here is a gentleman who will decide between us. Chevalier . . ."

BRÉ. "What is it?"

MOL. How! now, there's the other, taking the tone of a marquis. Did I not tell you that your part requires that you should speak naturally?

* 'School for Wives Criticised,' Scene vii.

BRÉ. True, I forgot.

MOL. Go on then. "Chevalier . . ."

BRÉ. "What is it?"

MOL. "Be umpire between us on a wager we have made."

BRÉ. "And what is it?"

MOL. "We are disputing who is the Matquis in Molière's 'School for Wives Criticised,' he says it is I, and I say it is he."

BRÉ. "Well, and I say that it is neither the one nor the other. You are wrong, both of you, to think of applying those generalities to private individuals.* It is just what I heard Molière saying the other day to some persons who accused him as you have just done. He said that nothing grieved him so much as to see himself accused of taking off a particular person in the portraits he draws; that his only object is to paint the manners of the time without aiming at individuals, and that all the characters he introduces are imaginary characters, lay figures so to speak, which he dresses according to his fancy to amuse the spectators. He would be very sorry, he said, to have called attention to anyone in particular; and if anything was capable of disgusting him against writing comedies, it was the resemblances which people would persist in finding, and of which his enemies tried very maliciously to avail themselves, in order to do him an injury with certain persons of whom he had never thought. And, indeed, I think he is right; for why, pray, should people apply all the words and gestures to one person, and get him into difficulties, by saying everywhere that he takes off such a one, when these words and gestures will apply to a hundred people at least? As the business of comedy is to represent in a general way all the defects of men, and particularly those of our own age, it is impossible for Molière to draw true characters without their corresponding to some character or other in the world; and if he must be accused of aiming at all the persons who are guilty of the faults he describes, he must certainly give up writing comedies."

* Compare note on p. 381.

MOL. "Upon my word, Chevalier, you are trying to justify Molière and to spare our friend here."

LA GRAN. "Not at all. It is you he spares, and we must find another judge."

MOL. "By all means. But I say, Chevalier, don't you think that your Molière is now very nearly exhausted, and that he will find no more subjects for . . ."

BRE. "No more subjects? Ah! my poor Marquis, we shall always give him plenty, for in spite of all he says and all he does, we are scarcely going the way to become wiser —"

MOL. Wait a moment; you must be more emphatic with this passage. Hear me say it:—"And that he will find no more subjects for . . ."* "No more subjects? Ah, my poor Marquis, we shall always give him plenty; for, in spite of all he says, and all he does, we are scarcely going the way to become wiser. Do you imagine that in his comedies he has exhausted all that is ridiculous in mankind? and that, without going farther than the Court, there are not still a score of others he has never touched upon? Are there not, for example, those who profess the greatest possible love for their friends, but who think it the proper thing to tear to pieces their character when their back is turned? Are there not those servile sycophants, those insipid flatterers who never season with salt the praises they give, and whose blandishments have a fulsome sweetness which makes you feel sick? Are there not those mean worshippers of success, those treacherous turncoats, who praise you in prosperity and abuse you in adversity? Are there not those who are always discontented with the Court, those useless parasites, those troublesome beggars, those people, in short, who can only reckon their importunities as services, and who expect to be rewarded for having besieged the King for ten years running? Are there not those who have for everybody the same soft greeting, who scatter their civilities right and left, and run to meet everybody with the same salutations, the same professions of friendship? 'Sir, your very obedient. I am

* Molière cleverly takes up his own defence himself, and thereby fixes the attention of his hearers.

entirely at your service, sir.' 'My dear sir, consider me wholly yours.' 'Reckon me, sir, amongst your warmest friends.' 'Sir, I am delighted to shake your hand.' 'Ah, sir, I did not see you.' 'Kindly show me how I can be of use to you, and be persuaded that I am entirely at your disposal.' 'Of all others, you are the man I esteem most.' 'There is nobody I honour as I do you.' 'I beg of you, believe it.' 'Do not doubt it, I beseech you.' 'Your servant.' 'Your very humble servant.'—Believe me, Marquis, Molière will always have more subjects than he can wish for, and all he has already done is but a trifle in comparison of what still remains for him to do." You must say it somewhat in that style.

BRÉ. That's enough. I see.

MOL. Go on.

BRÉ. "Here come Climène and Elise."

MOL. (*to MESDEMOISELLES DU PARC and MOLIERE*). Upon that, you both come up. (*to MADEMOISELLE DU PARC*) And mind you are very ceremonious and fussy, and that you strut about properly. It will be rather hard for you, but what is to be done? One must sometimes do violence to oneself.

MAD. MOL. "Ah, madam, I recognised you a long way off; I knew by your bearing that it could be no one but you."

MAD. DU PAR. "Yes, indeed, I am here waiting for a man to come out with whom I have a little business to arrange."

MAD. MOL. "It is just the same with me."

MOL. Ladies, these boxes will serve you for arm-chairs.

MAD. DU PAR. "Pray be seated, madam."

MAD. MOL. "Madam, after you."

MOL. Very good. After these little dumb ceremonies, you will each take a seat and speak sitting, except the Marquises, who must sometimes get up and sometimes sit down in accordance with their natural restlessness. "Gad, Chevalier, you ought to administer some physic to your canons."

BRÉ. "Why?"

MOI. "They don't look well."

BRIE. "Your wit's humble servant."

MAD. MOL. "Ah! my dear madam, how brilliantly white your complexion is, and how marvellously red your lips are."

MAD. DU PAR. "Ah! what are you saying, madam? I entreat of you not to look at me, I am to the last degree frightful to-day."

MAD. MOL. "I beseech you, dear madam, to raise your hood a little."

MAD. DU PAR. "Fie, I am frightful, I tell you, and quite dread the sight of my own face."

MAD. MOL. "You are so beautiful."

MAD. DU PAR. "Oh dear no!"

MAD. MOL. "Show yourself, I beg."

MAD. DU PAR. "Oh, pray do not ask me."

MAD. MOL. "I entreat you."

MAD. DU PAR. "No, no."

MAD. MOL. "But you must."

MAD. DU PAR. "You quite distress me."

MAD. MOL. "Only one moment."

MAD. DU PAR. "Ah!"

MAD. MOL. "You must, indeed, show yourself; we cannot exist without seeing you."

MAD. DU PAR. "Heavens! What a strange person you are! and how desperately you follow up what you set your mind upon!"

MAD. MOL. "Ah! madam, I assure you that you need not dread the broad daylight. Fancy, now, those wicked people who swore that you use paint! I promise you I shall contradict them next time."

MAD. DU PAR. "Alas! I do not even know what using paint means! But where are those ladies going?"

MAD. DE BRIE. "I hope you will allow us, ladies, to give you the best news I have heard for many a long day. Here is Mr. Lysidas, who has just told us that there is a play made against Molière which the *Grand Company* are going to act."

MOL. "It is true; they wished to read it to me. It is a certain Br Brou Brossaut who has written it."

DU CROIS. "It is announced under the name of Bour-

sault;* but the truth is, a great many people have contributed to the piece, and we expect a great success. As all the authors and actors look upon Molière as their greatest enemy, we have all united against him to injure him if we can. Each of us has added a stroke to his portrait, but we have taken good care not to put our names; he would have been only too proud to have succumbed, in the eyes of the world, under the united efforts of all Parnassus. To make his defeat appear more ignominious, we have purposely chosen an author without reputation."

MAD. DU PAR. "For my part I must say that I am delighted."

MOL. "So am I, by Jove, so am I; the jester shall be sat upon in his turn; he shall have a rap over the knuckles, by Jove."

MAD. DU PAR. "It will teach him to satirize everything. What! this impertinent fellow will not even allow that women have wit? He condemns all our noble expressions, and pretends that we should always talk in a matter of fact manner?"

MAD. DE BRIE. "Language is nothing; but to think that he censures all our attachments, however innocent they may be; and that, according to his way of thinking, it is a crime to have beauty."

MAD. DU CRO. "It is truly monstrous. There is not a woman now who is not driven to despair. Why does he not leave our husbands in peace? What business is it of his to make them notice things of which they never dreamt before?"

MAD. BÉR. "All that is hardly worth troubling oneself about; but the wicked jester even satirizes virtuous women, and calls them respectable she-devils."†

MAD. MOL. "He is an insolent fellow, and it serves him right if he is punished."

DU CRO. "This comedy, madam, will require support, and the actors of the Hôtel . . ."

* This is the only play in which Molière attacks anyone by name. He had good cause for so doing. See pp. 415, 416.

† 'The School for Wives Criticised,' Act ii. Sc. viii.

MAD. DU PAR. "Good gracious! Let them be under no apprehension; I will answer for its success with my life."

MAD. MOL. "You are quite right. Too many people are interested in finding the play good. I ask you if all those who think themselves satirized by Molière will not seize this opportunity of avenging themselves on him by applauding the play."

BRÉ. (*ironically*). "Certainly; and for me, I can answer for twelve marquises, six *précieuses*, twenty coquettes, and thirty badly-used husbands who will not fail to applaud heartily."

MAD. MOL. "Indeed? Why should he go and offend all those people; and particularly the husbands, who are the most inoffensive creatures in the world?"

MOL. "By Jove! I am told that he will have it hot, he and his plays; and that the comedians and the authors, from the triton to the minnow, are in a dence of a rage against him."

MAD. MOL. "It will serve him right. Why does he write wicked pieces which all Paris goes to see, and in which he describes people so faithfully that everybody knows who they are. Why does he not write plays like those of Mr. Lysidas? he would have nobody against him then, and all the authors would speak well of them. It is true that such plays do not attract those great crowds of people; but in return they are always well written, nobody says a word against them, and all those who go to hear them are extremely desirous of thinking them good."

DU CRO. "It is perfectly true that I have the comfort of making myself no enemies, and that all my works have the approbation of the learned."

MAD. MOL. "You are quite right to be satisfied with yourself; it is better than if you had all the applause of the public and all the money which can be got by Molière's pieces. What do you care whether people come to your plays, as long as they are approved by your friends the authors."

LA GRAN. "But when is the 'Painter's Portrait' to be played?"

DU CRO. "I don't know; but I look forward to the

time when, seated on the first row, I can cry out *fine, very fine!*"

MOL. "And I too, by Jove!"

LA GRAN. "So do I, as I hope to be saved."

MAD. DU PAR. "For my part, I shall not fail to show myself there, and I promise a storm of applause which shall put to flight all adverse opinions. The least thing we ought to do is to lend a helping hand of praise to the avenger of our interests."

MAD. MOL. "Well said!"

MAD. DE BRIE. "Yes, it is what we must all do."

MAD. BÉJ. "Certainly."

MAD. DU CRO. "Undoubtedly."

MAD. HER. "No quarter to this critic of our people."

MOL. "Upon my word, friend Chevalier, your Molière will have to hide himself."

BRÉ. "Molière hide himself! Nonsense! I tell you, Marquis, that he intends to take a seat on the stage and laugh with everybody else at the portrait they have drawn of him."*

MOL. "It will be on the wrong side of his mouth that he will laugh."

BRÉ. "Rubbish! he may find there more cause to laugh than you think of. I have seen the play, and as all that there is amusing in it, is really taken from Molière, the pleasure that it may give to others is not likely to be very unpleasant to him. I am very much mistaken if the passages in which they try to blacken his character are approved of by anybody. As to the people whom they have tried to set against him, because, forsooth, it is said his portraits are too true—not only is it showing very bad taste, but I cannot conceive anything more ridiculous and ill-judged than to reproach a dramatic author with describing men too well."

LA GRAN. "The actors told me that they expect he will answer it, and that then . . ."

BRÉ. "That he will answer it! Upon my word I should

* Molière went to see 'The Painter's Portrait,' and took a seat on the stage near the actors ('The Bores,' Sc. i.). His appearance created great commotion, as may be easily imagined.

think him a great fool if he took the trouble of answering all their abuse. Everyone knows well enough what motive urges them on, and the best answer he can give them is a comedy that will succeed like the others. That is the true way of being revenged on them; and, from what I know of them, I feel pretty sure that a new piece which will take away all their audience will vex them much more than all the satires that can be written on their persons."

MOL. "But, Chevalier . . ."

MAD. BÉR. Just allow me to interrupt the rehearsal for one moment. (*to MOLIERE*) Shall I tell you what I think? If I were in your place, I should have done things very differently. Everybody expects a vigorous answer from you; and, from what I have been told of the manner in which you were treated in that comedy, you had a right to say anything against those actors, and you ought not to spare one of them.

MOL. I feel vexed to hear you speak thus. But it is always the way with you women. You want me to fire up at once against them, and, following their example, to indulge in all kinds of abuse and insult. Much honour, truly, I should get by it, and much annoyance I should give them! Did they not prepare themselves for that, and when they were discussing if they should play 'The Painter's Portrait,' and were hesitating for fear I should answer it, did not some one exclaim, "Let him abuse us as much as he pleases, provided we get money!" Was not that the mark of a soul very sensitive to shame, and would it not, forsooth, be a fine sort of revenge in me to give them what they long to receive!

MAD. DE BRIE. They complained very much of three or four words which you said of them in 'The School for Wives Criticised,' and 'The Affected Ladies.'

MOL. Yes, truly those words are very offensive, and they have indeed great reason for quoting them! Nonsense, it has nothing to do with it. The greatest harm I have done them is, that I have been fortunate enough to give more pleasure than they wished, and the whole of their conduct since we came to Paris has only too clearly shown what ails them. Let them do what they please; all they

imagine against me is of very little consequence to me. They criticise my plays, so much the better! Heaven preserve me from making some they would not criticise; it would be a bad day's work for me.

MAD. DE BRIE. Still, it is not very pleasant to see one's works picked to pieces.

MOL. And what does it matter to me? Have I not obtained all I wished for my comedy, since it has had the good fortune of pleasing the high-born persons I particularly strive to please? Have I not cause to be satisfied with its fate, and do not all their censures come too late? What has its success to do with me now? If people attack a successful play, do they not attack the judgment of all those who have approved of it, rather than the skill of him who wrote it?

MAD. DE BRIE. All the same, I should have played off that little scribbler, who is conceited enough to write against people who do not trouble their heads about him.

MOL. You are perfectly absurd. What a fine subject to amuse the Court, Mr. Boursault would be! I should very much like to know in what possible way one could make an amusing personage of him; and whether, if he were represented on the stage, he would be fortunate enough to make people laugh. To ridicule him before such an august assembly would be doing him too much honour; there is nothing he would like better, and he attacks me without a cause, simply in some way or other to attract attention to himself. He is a man who has nothing to lose, and the actors have set him on me in order to engage me in a foolish quarrel, and to prevent me, by so doing, from writing other works I have in hand; and you are all simple enough to fall into this snare! But I shall make a public declaration about it. I do not mean to make any answer to all their criticisms and counter-criticisms. Let them say all that is bad against my comedies; I am quite willing. Let them take my plays after me, turn them inside out like an old coat, bring them on their stage and try to profit by any amusing thing that may be found in them, and by a little of my good fortune; I give them leave, they have need of it, and I should be very glad to help them to find a living, provided they

can be satisfied with what I can decently grant them. But courtesy has its limits, there are things which can amuse neither spectators nor him of whom they are spoken. I freely leave to them my works, my face, my attitudes, my words, the tone of my voice, and my style of reciting, to do and say whatever they will, if they can derive any profit from them. I do not object to any of these things, and I shall be charmed if the public is pleased by them; but at the same time, while I give up all that to them, they ought to do me the favour to leave me the rest, and not to touch on such subjects as those which I hear they introduce into their comedies.* This is what I would politely request of that honourable gentleman who undertakes to write for them; and this, and no other answer but this, will they have from me.

MAD. BÉJ. But still

MOL. But still, you will make me lose my head. Let us give up all talk on this subject. We are wasting our time making speeches, instead of rehearsing our comedy. Where did we leave off? I do not remember.

MAD. DE BRIE. You were at that passage

MOL. O good Heavens! what noise is that? it is for certain the King who is coming, and I see that we have not time to go through the whole of it. How very foolish we were to throw our time away! Now then, try all you can and do your best for what remains.

MAD. BÉJ. Upon my word I am quite frightened, and it is impossible for me to play my part if I have not rehearsed it all.

MOL. What! you can't play your part?

MAD. BÉJ. Indeed I can't.

MAD. DU PAR. Nor can I.

MAD. DE BRIE. Nor I.

MAD. MOL. Nor I.

MAD. HER. Nor I.

MAD. DU CRO. Nor I.

MOL. What on earth are you about? Surely you are laughing at me!

* 'Le Portrait du Peintre,' by Boursault; 'L'Impromptu de l'Hôtel de Condé,' by Montfleury; and 'La Vengeance des Marquis,' by de Visé, all contained personal attacks against Molière and his wife.

SCENE IV.—BÉJART, MOLIERE, LA GRANGE, DU CROISY, MESDEMOISELLES DU PARC, BÉJART, DE BRIE, MOLIERE, DU CROISY, HERVÉ.

BÉJ. Gentlemen, I come to tell you that the King has arrived, and that he is waiting for you to begin.

MOL. Ah! sir, you see me in the greatest distress; I am almost distracted. These ladies are frightened, and say that they must rehearse the whole of their parts before they begin. We beg the favour of a few more moments. The King is kind, and he knows that the piece was got up in a great hurry.
(Exit BÉJART.)

SCENE V.—MOLIERE, LA GRANGE, DU CROISY, MESDEMOISELLES DU PARC, BÉJART, DE BRIE, MOLIERE, DU CROISY, HERVÉ.

MOL. I beg of you, take courage; try to recover yourselves, I entreat you.

MAD. DU PAR. You should go and excuse yourself.

MOL. What do you mean by excusing myself?

SCENE VI.—MOLIERE, LA GRANGE, DU CROISY, MESDEMOISELLES DU PARC, BÉJART, DE BRIE, MOLIERE, DU CROISY, HERVÉ, *an ATTENDANT*.*

ATT. Gentlemen, do begin.

MOL. In a moment, sir. (*to his fellow-actors*) I believe that I shall lose my senses in this business, and . . .

SCENE VII.—MOLIERE, LA GRANGE, DU CROISY, MESDEMOISELLES DU PARC, BÉJART, DE BRIE, MOLIERE, DU CROISY, HERVÉ, *a second ATTENDANT*.

ATT. Gentlemen, do begin.

MOL. In a moment, sir. (*to his fellow-actors*) What! would you have me . . .

* *Faire le nécessaire*, or *trancher du nécessaire*, means to occupy oneself with other people's business (see 'Les Fâcheux, Act i., Sc. i.), and this is perhaps the meaning. But I have translated here *un nécessaire* by "Attendant," as BÉjart is evidently sent by the King, and yet in the list of personages is described as the actor *qui fait le nécessaire*. Moreover, *nécessaire* in the language of the *Précieuses* was a *servant* (see 'Les Précieuses Ridicules,' Sc. vii.).

SCENE VIII.—MOLIÈRE, LA GRANGE, DU CROISY, MES-
DEMOISELLES DU PARC, BÉJART, DE BRIE, MOLIÈRE, DU
CROISY, HERVÉ, a *third* ATTENDANT.

ATT. Gentlemen, do begin.

MOL. Yes, sir, we will begin directly. (*to his fellow-actors*) Ah! how officious those people are, and how many come to bid us begin when the King did not order them!

SCENE IX.—MOLIÈRE, LA GRANGE, DU CROISY, MES-
DEMOISELLES DU PARC, BÉJART, DE BRIE, MOLIÈRE, DU
CROISY, HERVÉ, a *fourth* ATTENDANT.

ATT. Gentlemen, do begin.

MOL. Quite ready, sir. (*to his fellow-actors*) What! shall I have the

SCENE X.—BÉJART, MOLIÈRE, LA GRANGE, DU CROISY,
MESDEMOISELLES DU PARC, BÉJART, DE BRIE, MOLIÈRE,
DU CROISY, HERVÉ.

MOL. Sir, you are coming to tell us to begin, I know; but

BÉJ. No, gentlemen, I only come to tell you that the King, having been informed of the difficulty you are in, is graciously pleased to put off hearing your new comedy to another time, and will be satisfied to-day with whatever you can give him.

MOL. Ah! sir, you give me new life. The King bestows on us the greatest favour in the world by giving us time for what he desired; we will all go and thank him for the extreme goodness he displays towards us.

NOTE 1.

The Bores, Act II., Scene 2.

Piquet is played somewhat differently now from what it was in the time of Molière. In his day the sixes were left in the pack, which consisted of thirty-six cards. There were twelve cards in the stock, of which the elder hand might take eight, the younger four. It appears that the elder hand only took six, which is somewhat remarkable, as his cards must have been very bad to cause him to propose a fresh deal. But it might easily be that St. Bouvain's hand consisted of a sixième minor in diamonds, and rubbish in other suits, and that his only chance was to keep the sixième, and to take in very fortunately. Thus, if he takes in ace of diamonds, ace, king, knave, and a small spade, and six of hearts, he has point and sixième good for twenty-three, and plays ace, knave, ten of diamonds, making twenty-six. The cards below a ten do not count in play in this hand (though this rule is not universal), consequently the remaining diamonds would make tricks, but would not add to St. Bouvain's score. St. Bouvain then plays his four spades, three of which are counting cards; this makes him twenty-nine, and he still wants one of a pique, as his remaining card is a non-counting card. But Alcippe, who has to keep one card, has now to decide whether he will keep the ace of hearts or the ace of clubs. He determines to keep the latter, and in consequence loses the game; and as the last trick counts one, is piqued after all, although he has just been pluming himself on the fact that there is no pique against him. It is true that he would lose the game just the same if capoted without being piqued; as, for instance, if only two of the spades had been counting cards. But the additional aggravation of being piqued seems to have been in the mind of the author, as he is specially careful to state that Alcippe threw out the queen and ten of spades, leaving three counting cards for his adversary. It is evident also that if St. Bouvain has the knave of spades he cannot hold a tierce or quart in spades; and this seems to be assumed, as either of these sequences would give St. Bouvain a pique. However, the French commentators take the view that St. Bouvain only arrived at twenty-eight after playing his spades, and they thus miss one of the annoying features of the hand. When one looks at the skilful way in which Molière builds up all the little worries that can be laid on the top of one another in a piquet hand, it can hardly be supposed that he would let this one pass. (*See Preface.*)

NOTE 2.

School for Wives, Act IV., Scene 8.

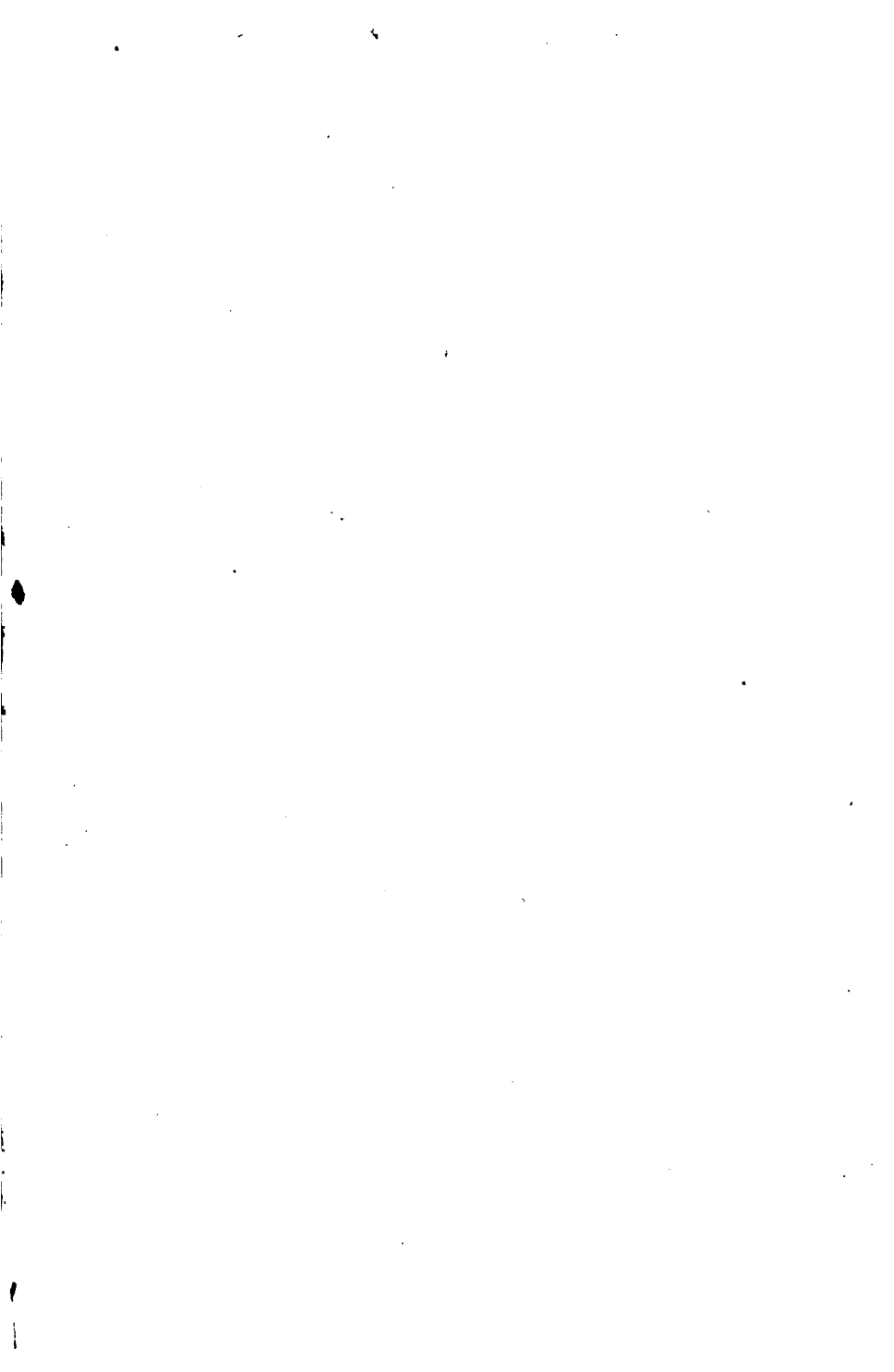
It is to this passage, no doubt, that Bossuet alludes when he writes in his 'Maxims and Reflections on Comedy' that Molière "puts forward, in the strongest light, the advantages of an infamous tolerance on the part of husbands." Bossuet can be said, we believe, to have treated too seriously the mockery of Chrysalde. The latter has taken good care to begin by saying that he *blames* the guilty resignation of certain husbands; then, urged on by the exasperation of Arnolphe, he ends by laughing at him in terms but too easily tolerated, no doubt, by the manners of the times as well as the tradition of the Middle Ages. It is to the actor who plays the part of Chrysalde carefully to affect that intentional sneering paradox, and to the critics carefully to weigh all the meaning of what Molière says elsewhere, not only about his own comedies, but of comedies in general: "Every-one knows that comedies are only written for the stage, and I should advise those people only who have eyes to discover while reading all the dumb-show of the theatre, to read this one ('L'Amour Médecin')."

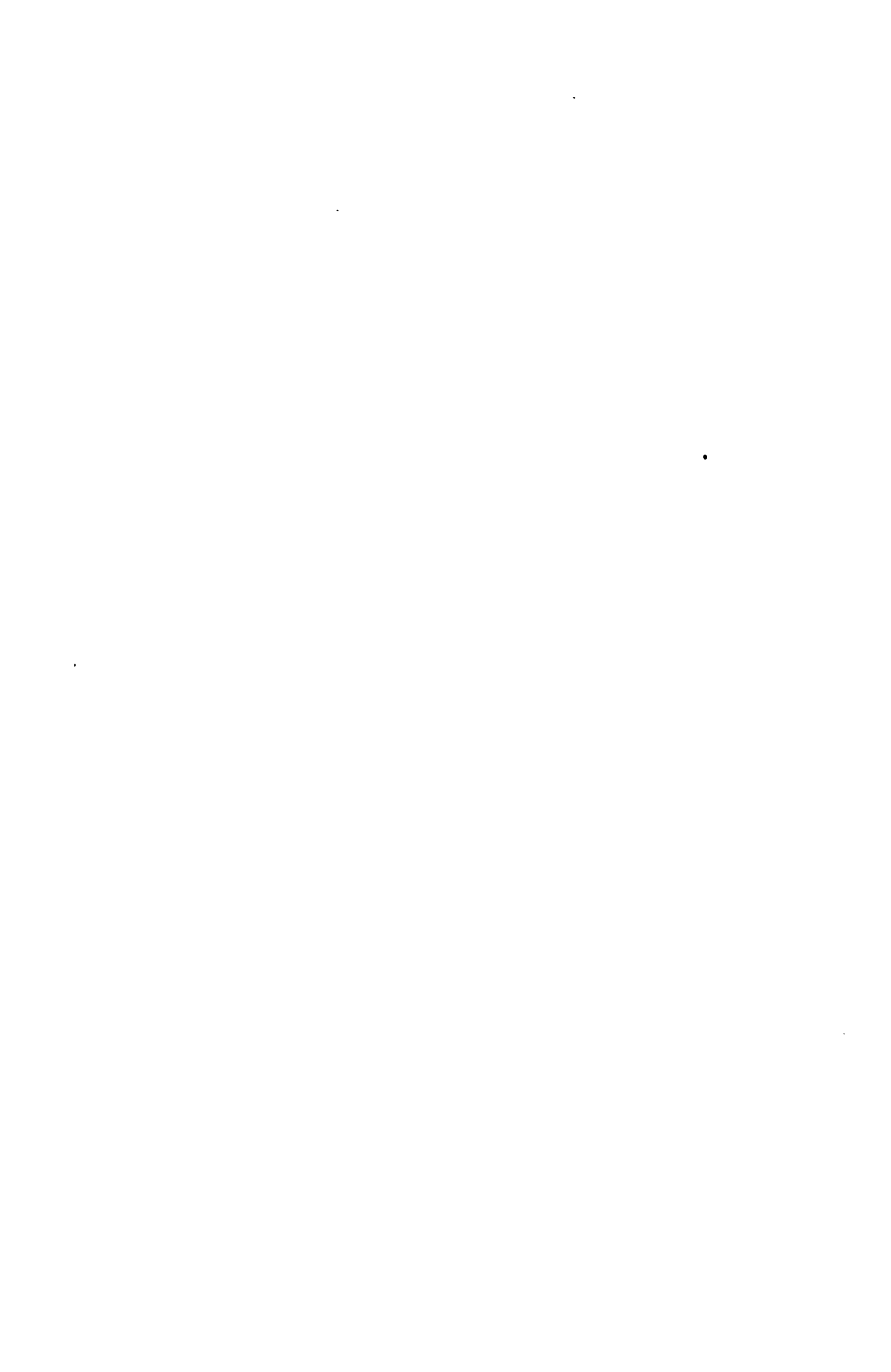
One of the last verses of this scene explains clearly how Molière wished Chrysalde's speech to be understood. Arnolphe knows so well that Chrysalde does not speak seriously, that he cuts short the discussion by saying: "This rillery, in short, is unpleasant to me."
—See 'Despois,' vol. iii. p. 249.

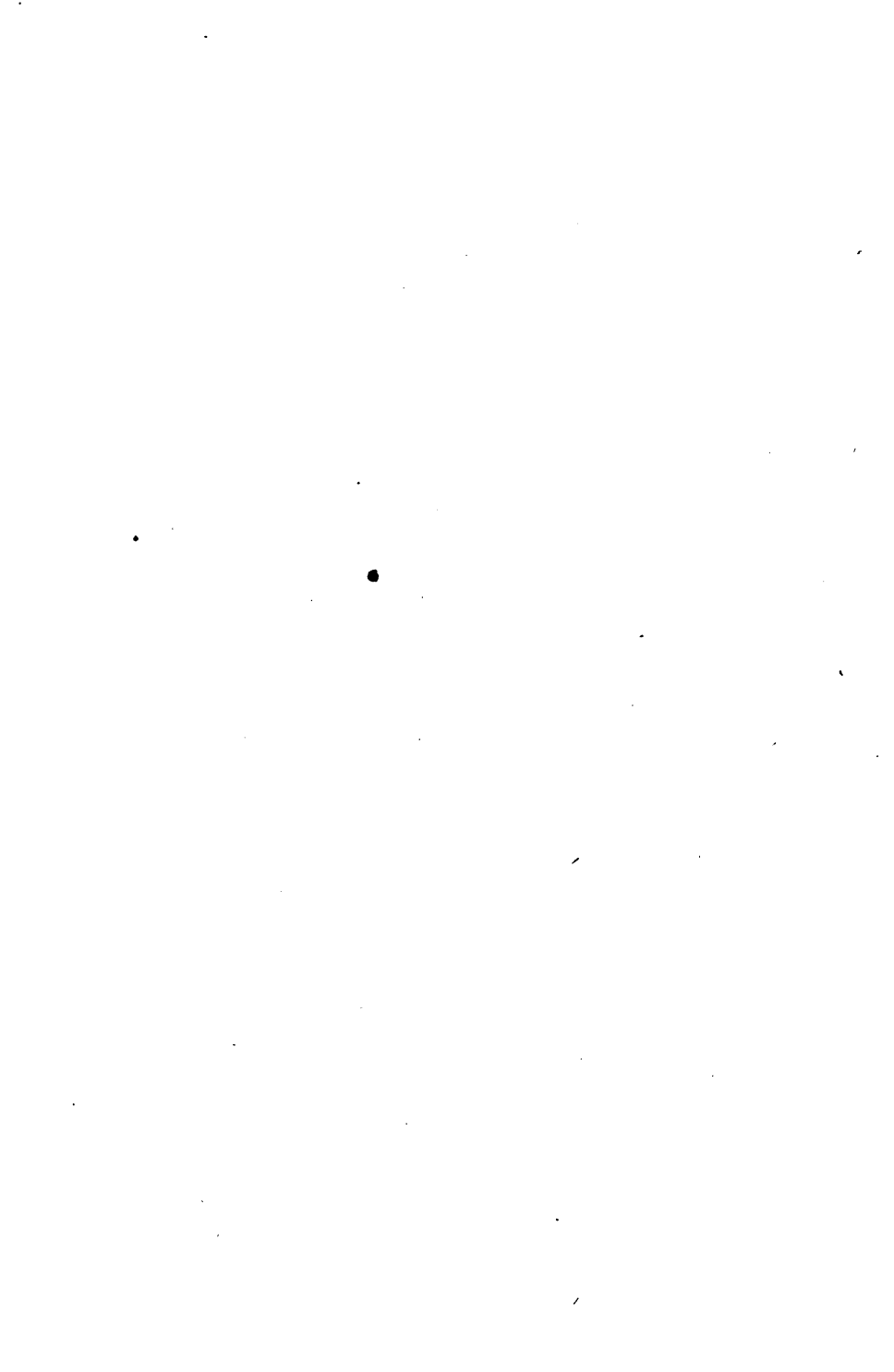
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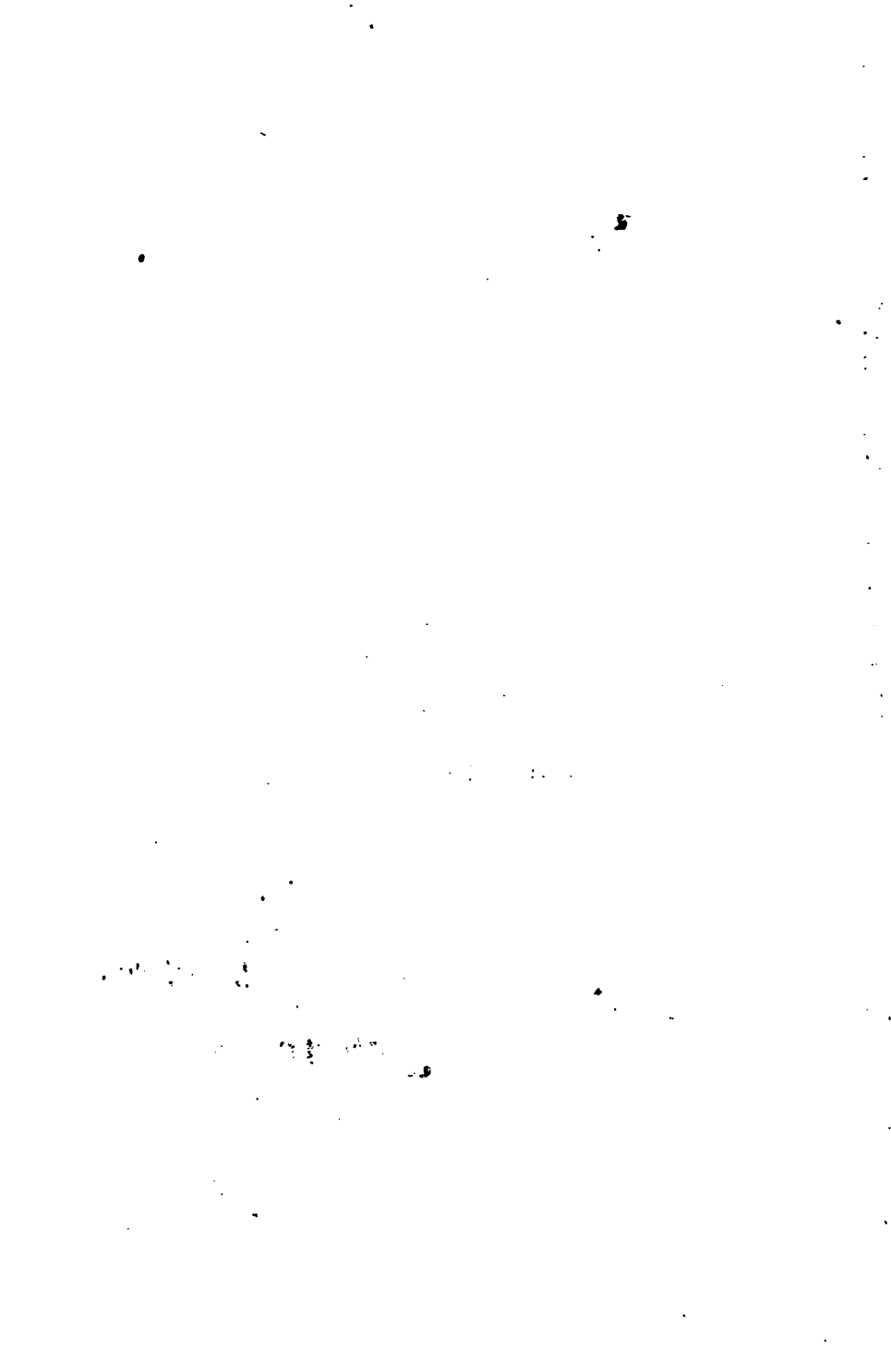
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